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# MODERN DRUMMER<sup>®</sup>

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

March '96

## Bill Stewart NEW YORK'S HOTTEST

FEMALE DRUMMERS  
ROUND TABLE: Sheila E,  
Terri Lyne Carrington,  
Patty Schemel, and more!

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Martin Parker  
& Billy Thomas

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### Resonance

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### Applications

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### Configuration

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### Sound

Fat, focused attack

### Resonance

Controlled ring

### Applications

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## GENERA EQ3 Batter

### Configuration

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### Sound

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### Resonance

Controlled, focused

### Applications

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## GENERA G1 Batter

### Configuration

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### Sound

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### Resonance

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### Applications

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## GENERA EQ3 Resonant

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## DRUMHEADS



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The setting may change - Maceo Parker, John Scofield, Joe Lovano, Lee Konitz - but that sweet soulful swing remains. Bill Stewart's generation may have missed Birth Of Cool, but this drummer has caught up admirably, as his brand new solo disc proves.

**by Ken Micallef**

## Female Drummers Round Table 64

In these politically correct times, it's easy to forget that it still isn't necessarily easy to be a female in a male-dominated drummer's world. Sheila E, Terri Lyne Carrington, Hilary Jones, Kate Schellenbach, Patty Schemel, Dawn Richardson, and Denise Fraser tell it like it is.

**by Robyn Flans**

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## Targeting Your Material



Every month, readers send us articles for publication in the magazine. Oddly enough, many authors don't quite understand how to target what they've written to the cor-

rect MD column department. Most of our department names are somewhat self-explanatory, others may require some clarification.

The majority of MD's performance departments, representing specific areas of drumming, usually include musical examples: *Rock 'N' Jazz Clinic*, *Rock Perspectives*, *Jazz Drummers' Workshop*, *Latin Symposium*, *Strictly Technique*, *Understanding Rhythm*, and *Rudimental Symposium* are the most common. Practical advice on club date drumming, which may or may not include musical examples, runs under either the *Club*

*Scene* or *The Jobbing Drummer* heading, while big band and studio recording tips fall under *Driver's Seat* and *In The Studio*, respectively. Drum instructors with valid thoughts on teaching should send their material in care of *Teachers' Forum*, while country and show drumming articles can be directed to the *Drum Country* and *Show Drummers' Seminar* departments.

Our shorter profile pieces on artists appear under the headings *Portraits* and *Up & Coming*, depending upon the status of the individual. Keep in mind, however, that most of the writing for these departments is assigned, so check with an MD editor before moving ahead.

Articles that focus on equipment matters—like maintenance and repair—are channeled through *Shop Talk*. Transcriptions of rock tunes and classic drum solos appear in *Rock Charts* and *Drum Soloist*. Material that's more conceptual in nature can run through several different departments: *Concepts*, *Basics*, *Head Talk*, and *A Different View* (where other instrumen-

talists, producers, and the like are interviewed) are the key headings. Then, of course, there's *Taking Care Of Business* for advice on the business end, *Health And Science* for health-related issues, and *Slightly Offbeat* for items of a humorous nature. Finally, we periodically run articles that deal specifically with percussion; *Around The World* and *Percussion Today* are where they should be directed.

Bear in mind that we'll accept and publish a well-written, informative article even if it *hasn't* been targeted to a specific department. We're quite accustomed to directing and re-directing articles to their appropriate categories when they arrive unspecified. However, we've found that people who want to take a shot at writing an article tend to do a much better job when they know precisely what segment of the drumming audience they're writing for, and where in the magazine their material best fits. Keep it in mind if you're planning to send us something.

RS

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FEATURES EDITOR	WILLIAM F. MILLER
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**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Robyn Flans, Burt Korall, Rick Mattingly, Ken Micallef, Matt Peiken, Teri Saccone, Robert Santelli, Robin Tolleson, Rich Watson.

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## Profile: Doane Perry of Jethro Tull



### PERSONAL DATA:

*Doane Perry*  
BORN: New York City, USA

### CURRENT & RECENT PROJECTS:

- Completed 18 month World Tour with Jethro Tull, celebrating the band's 25th Anniversary, and accompanying Boxed Set and Anniversary Video.

- Recorded and performed with Ian Anderson on "Divinities" Tour, playing orchestral and tuned percussion, as well as drumset.
- World Tour with Jethro Tull from 1995-1996 to promote new album entitled "Roots to Branches."
- Recorded my own project entitled "Thread" due out this year.

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# PREMIER



## TRIS IMBODEN



I love the combination of confidence and humility that Tris Imboden expressed in his December '95 cover story. Here's a guy with unbelievable credits who still exhibits the enthusiasm and freshness of a kid just starting out. I've seen Tris play with Kenny Loggins, with Al Jarreau, with Chicago, and even with the Wild Clams. There's no question that the guy knows how to support a band with power and energy. Yet he's still able to add tasteful and creative drumming that sets him apart from any number of competent—but essentially faceless—"hired gun" studio and touring drummers. I'm thrilled that his career has finally taken him into the higher echelons of musical success, and I wish him a long and continued run. I'll be listening!

R. Donald  
New York, NY

I'm sure Tris Imboden is a fabulous drummer. (I'm not a big Chicago or Kenny Loggins fan, so I'll admit to not having heard much of his work.) But it frightens me tremendously that he seems so resigned to living with carpal tunnel syndrome. His comments indicate that he is aware of how serious it is, and he actually enjoins other drummers to seek formal technical training to try to avoid developing the problem. That's all well and good, but in the meantime he says things like, "There is only a 50/50 chance of success with surgery, which is not good enough odds for me," "I've learned how to play *with my hands going numb*" (emphasis supplied), and "Meanwhile, I can't stop working."

An attitude like this from a major performing artist sets a dangerous example for younger drummers. Tris states that he received no formal training, and that he came up through rock bands—hitting hard. As a result, he's had to live with carpal tunnel syndrome for over ten years. Literally thousands of young drummers today are following exactly the same stylis-

tic path—and they can expect the same devastating result.

Career or no career, Tris should seek a meaningful solution to his problem. If it perhaps means a layoff, so be it. What sort of career will he have if his condition worsens to a point where he cannot play at all? No one should ignore a grievously debilitating medical problem, no matter what their performing stature.

Frederick Johnson  
Los Angeles, CA

## MORE CRIMSON DUO



Double thanks on the Crimson Duo feature in your November '95 issue. I enjoyed it so much I read it twice! As one who has long admired Bill Bruford's attitude, ethic, and drive for creative expression, I always find his thoughts refreshing. His responses to questions on feel and the precision of time playing remind me that they are not the 'be-all and end-all' of good music. In the May '95 issue of *Bass Player* magazine Jeff Berlin wrote a great piece that defined the difference between "good" time and "metronomic" time. (All drummers should hit up their bass player for a copy.) After decades of studying our instrument and years of reading *Modern Drummer*, I think that I understand what Bill is trying to say. There are no absolutes in music, and although feel and precision time-playing are valuable questions today, they may ultimately find their way onto the shelf alongside "'matched grip vs. traditional?" and "drum machine: friend or foe?" Keep up the great work!

Bill Donnelly  
Patchogue, NY

## JAMIE OLDAKER

I'd like to thank you for the interview with Jamie Oldaker of the Tractors in your November '95 issue. As a drummer of

eleven years, I aspire to work in the Nashville music scene. It's great to hear the truth brought out about that scene—like how a certain band's drummer is not always the one who records with his band. Similar aspects of Nashville's recording politics were brought up in an interview with Brian Prout of Diamond Rio a while back. These aspects will certainly help me when I dive head-first into the Nashville pool. Thanks again.

Ted Smith III  
Bloomsburg, PA

## NOBLE & COOLEY ON RIMS

We want to correct an oversight that occurred in our recent ads in this publication. In our "Patent Office" ad we referred to the "rim," and we didn't give credit to PureCussion, Inc. for the use of their product. We do use the RIMS product and recommend that our drums be mounted with the Resonant Isolation Mounting System by PureCussion, Inc. We take full advantage of their patent and apply it to our patent for mounting their product under the lugs on our drums. Our patent covers the placement of the RIMS mount—or any other mounting system—under the lugs. Our apologies to PureCussion for any confusion this has caused.

Noble & Cooley Company  
Granville, MA

## REGARDING ELECTRONIC EDITING

My thanks to Nathan Scott for his *Readers' Platform* letter in the December '95 *MD* and his positive comments about my review of Roland's *TD-5* in the June '95 issue. There is one misunderstanding on his part, however, that I would like to clear up.

Part of writing equipment reviews involves evaluating a piece of gear based on its intended market. The *TD-5* is aimed at novice electronic drummers. It is easier to use and faster to make common edits (that is, to change a sound or its tuning) on the *TD-5* than on Roland's more sophisticated *TD-7*. I applaud this. However, I did



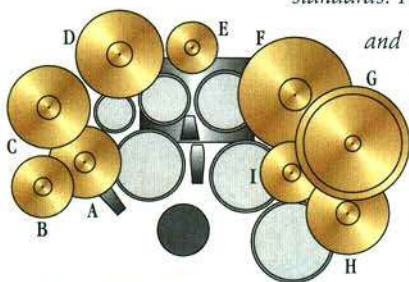
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not state that "less editing is better," nor did I say that reducing the number of features or editable parameters on a piece of gear is in some way beneficial. (Who would?) I did contrast the greater ease of editing on the *TD-5* to the *TD-7* and tried to compare the tradeoffs between them in a meaningful way for potential buyers.

Nathan said that many drum modules are "toys" and that he would like to be able to edit every aspect of a sample's waveform. First, the *TD-5* is no toy, and it even includes features the *TD-7* lacks. Second, as the owner of two samplers, a *ddrum 3*, a *TD-7*, assorted computer music gear, and a commercial recording studio, let me mention that many of us have been editing waveforms for the past ten years. Not until recently has that been possible in a drum module.

It is expensive, Nathan, but if you are serious about your editing ambitions, let me recommend a *ddrum 3* module (reviewed by Rob Fedson in the March '95 *MD* and by me in the May '95 *Electronic Musician*) and a Macintosh computer.

More affordably, you may want to consider any Roland sampler, because they include a video output for direct connection to a TV for computer-style waveform editing with a mouse.

If you take the plunge you may find, as I have, that the user-friendliness of your equipment can make the difference between a simple, creative task and mind-numbing drudgery. Happy drumming!

Brad Schlueter  
Hanover Park, IL



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

I've been playing drums for eighteen years. Since I live in San Diego, I also surf as a hobby, and I recently joined the Surfrider Foundation. It's a non-profit environmental group for clean ocean water. (Call [800] 743-7873 if you'd like information on the group.) Joining this group got me thinking about the environmental impact of the drumming industry. Personally speaking, a pair of sticks lasts me a few weeks, and

drumheads last me about a year. But I know lots of drummers who go through these items much more rapidly. There are no provisions to recycle sticks or heads in my area. I haven't seen the subject discussed in the year I've been reading *MD* (other than one reader who suggested using old heads as houseplant "coasters.") Neither have I seen recycling promoted by any manufacturer or major local retailer. Sticks (which contribute to deforestation) and heads (which are not bio-degradable and thus contribute to landfill overload) are the major consumables that should be considered for recycling. But what about old or damaged drumshells, obsolete or broken hardware, and cracked cymbals?

I'm sure drummers are aware of the financial costs and emotional rewards of their hobby or profession. Now let's start doing something about what happens when we put the sticks down (or break them).

Brian Austin  
San Diego, CA



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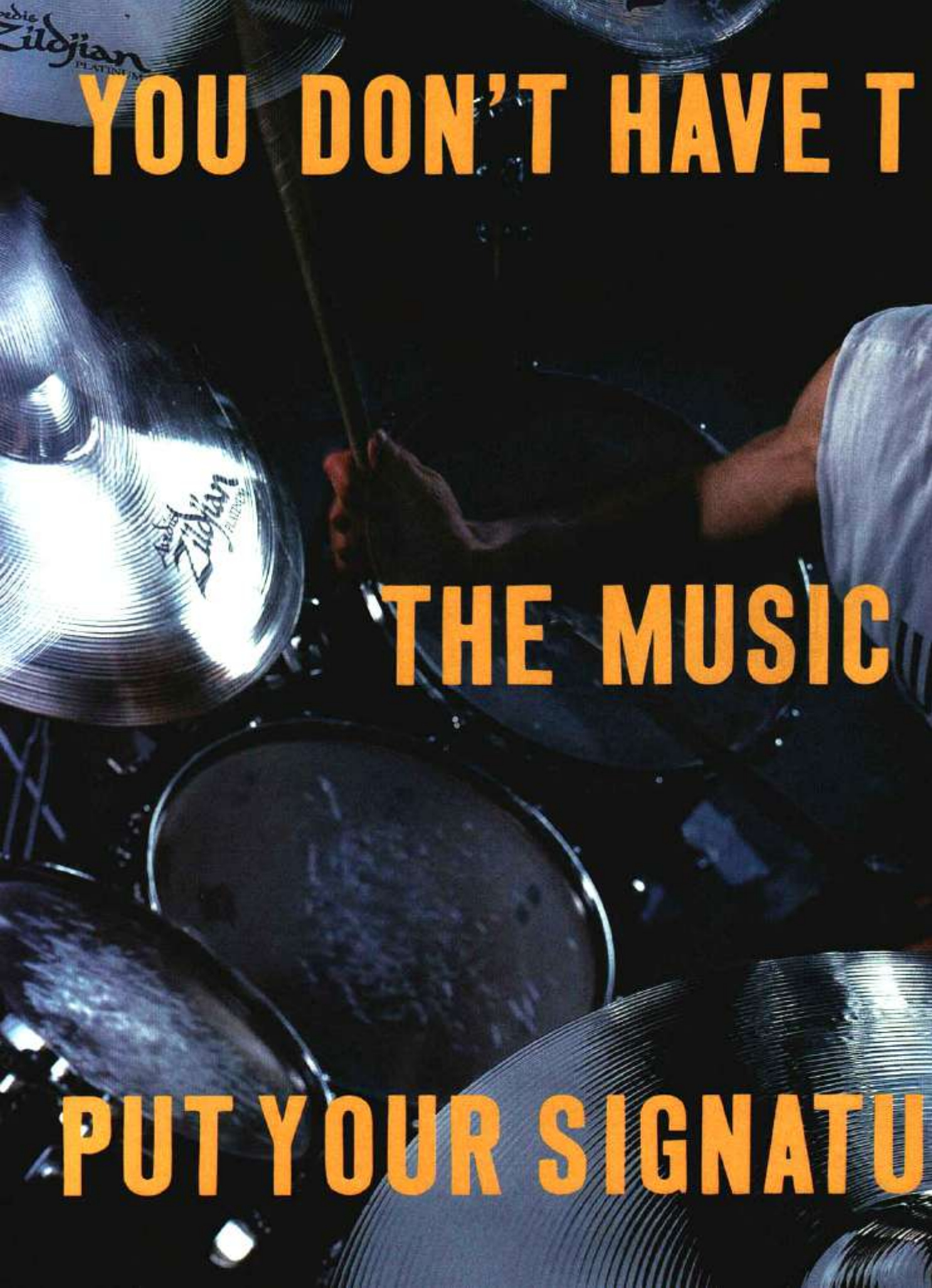
DW Pedal Artists shown above (from left to right) are: Steve Smith (Vital Information), Russ McKinnon (independent), Walfredo Reyes, Jr. (LA studio), Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers) and Jonathan Moffett (Janet Jackson).

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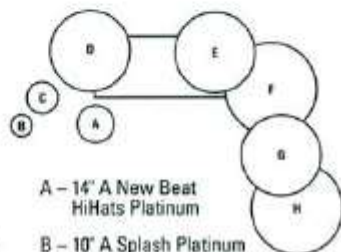
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G - 19" A Rock Crash Platinum

H - 22" A China Boy Low



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# D.J. Bonebrake

## The X Factor

Except for the fact that he had to leave his year-old baby daughter, D.J. Bonebrake was happy to get back on the road last year with X, in support of their *Unclogged* CD. "The way I characterize most of the unplugged records is it's bands that sit down while they play the same thing they usually play. *Unclogged* has totally different versions," says Bonebrake of the album described as an acoustic best-of album. "On some of the songs I played vibes, which I've played off and on for twenty years," he says, adding that while he enjoys slamming too, this project was definitely creative.

"It's apples and oranges," D.J. insists. "It's more creative because I've had seventeen years to learn some of these songs, and then suddenly we had four or five rehearsals and changed everything. We sat around and said, 'Let's try this,' and it either worked or it didn't."

Along with the new versions came a different approach. "The most obvious difference was the volume level," he says. "It's a lot softer and I played brushes on most songs. Sometimes I'd use a brush and a stick, and sometimes just sticks, but even then I played pretty softly. The songs are different, so the feel is different. Some are kind of country-sounding and others are spacey. The song 'World's A Mess It's In My Kiss' was originally pure rock 'n' roll, but now it's like a John Coltrane ballad. I play little Spanish-type licks on the drums with brushes, and I hit a sizzle cymbal. It's real moody. Another I really like is 'Unheard Music,' which play vibes on. I think it's so moody; there's just something spooky about it."

D.J. has been involved in some other projects besides X. He's done some recording with Eliza Gilkyson, and he plays live gigs in the L.A. area with artists like Tony Gilkyson, Joey Sehee, Lysa Flores, Amy Hartman, and Susan James. Most recently D.J. replaced Joey Waronker in the John Doe Thing.

## Velvet Crush and Matthew Sweet's Ric Menck

Velvet Crush drummer Ric Menck listens to a lot of records. He can tell you which Stax songs Al Jackson drummed on, or which Byrds tunes were penned by Gram Parsons. "Sometimes I think people want to make us feel bad because we like music so much, like we're lost in our record collections," he laments.

An undeniably positive result of Menck's musical reverence, though, is evident on *Teenage Symphonies To God*, Velvet Crush's 1994 album. A rock 'n' roll record packed with pop, country, and rhythm & blues influences, it epitomizes what Parsons called "cosmic American music." Produced by Mitch Easter (REM, Let's Active), *Teenage Symphonies* sounds instantly familiar and timeless. "We made it so you couldn't date the recording," says Menck. He and Easter used "as few mic's as possible" to obtain a natural drum sound and kept the drum tracks lower in the mix than they are on contemporary recordings. "I love the way drums sound on old Blue Note records," Menck explains. "The musicians controlled the dynamics; they wouldn't bring up a fader to make a tom-tom louder, they'd hit the drum harder."

Even Menck's drumming style reflects his ability to borrow from the past while creating his own sound—he transforms Gene Clark's obscure-

country ballad "Why Not Your Baby" with a beat straight out of late 1960s soul.

Menck worked closely with Easter producing *Teenage Symphonies*, as he did when Velvet Crush returned to Easter's North Carolina home studio to record their third album, due out this year. Menck developed his studio prowess prior to signing with a major label by releasing twenty independent recordings under various band names, although he disavows these pop gems. "They were really about learning how to use the studio," he contends.

The studio is where you're likely to find Menck when he's not touring with Velvet Crush. He has recorded with Stephen Duffy, Shoes, and longtime friend Matthew Sweet, who produced Velvet Crush's first album. Menck drummed on Sweet's last four albums and toured with him for several years. "The first tour was just the two of us

in a car with an acoustic guitar and a snare drum, like buskers," he says. Menck views touring somewhat romantically, recalling his heroes from Hank Williams to Hiisker Du. "That's the way musicians brought their music to people before MTV," he says. Velvet Crush will spend most of 1996 on the road to support their upcoming album.

Meredith Ochs



Michael Matthews

Robyn Flans



# Lynn Massey

## Neal McCoy's Shuffle Ace

Lynn Massey says working with country's Neal McCoy for the past five years has been a great come-back for him. "I'm forty-six. I worked with Red Steagall for almost ten years, but then things stopped. It was good to have a chance to get back on the road. Even though I had the time off I never stopped playing."

Does age enter into his playing? "At forty-six maybe my speed has come down a little bit, but I think I offset that with the experience. Maybe I'm not as flashy as I used to be, but I'm probably more solid."

And solid is what Massey says McCoy needs from a drummer. "Neal needs someone who can give him a solid beat in playing the new country material, the straight 8ths and upper-tempo styles. Neal sings a great ballad, but we only do about three a night. And he's probably one of the most entertaining artists on the road right now. He participates with the band, and he's always moving. His biggest thing is to make the audience laugh and cry, and completely tire them out. And he's a very spontaneous performer. We have no set list. He plays off the crowd, and if he sees

something is not working, he'll stop and tease, 'I can see you don't like that, so I'll try this.'"

Besides his role as drummer in the band, Lynn is also the bandleader, which requires him to take care of band issues. "I'm a good friend to all of the guys in the band," he says, "so they can talk to me if there's a problem. It keeps Neal from having to be bothered with it. He always knows his band is going to be on stage, dressed right, and none of them drinking or on drugs. He trusts that when he walks on stage, we're 100% behind him."

Massey is known for his country shuffle. "Basically, a lot of people don't realize that when you're shuffling on the hi-hat, you should tighten up the swing feel. What I mean by 'tighten up' is playing right on top of it and pulling the '&s' even closer to the downbeats. It's just a bit more on the edge that way."

Catch Lynn's great shuffle groove (and others) on the road with McCoy. They're currently on tour.

**Robyn Flans**

# News...

**Joe Gallivan** recently in the studio with Elton Dean.

A *Gift For You*, **Yoron Israel's** debut solo recording, has just been released.

**Lynn Coulter** recently taped a *Baywatch* episode with Ricky Van Shelton.

**Steve Theard** is on Terence Trent D'Arby's latest release, *Vibrator*. Steve is currently on the road with D'Arby.

After touring Europe with Long John Baldry, **Eric Webster** has been touring the U.S., Canada, and Europe with Colin James. He can also be seen in James' recent video for "Saviour."

**Brock Avery** finished Wayne Kramer's second Epitaph record and is currently back on the road with the MC5 founder. Brock also recently played gigs with Marshall Crenshaw, and he can be seen in Jill Sobule's video and around town playing with the Gun Club.

**Mas Palermo** was the drummer/co-producer and co-composer of Monte Warden's *Here I Am*. They are playing dates in support of the album.

**Jim Christie** on Dwight Yoakam's *Gone*.

**J.D. Blair** playing with Shelby Lynne.

As a member of Hayride, **Will Kraft** is on the road supporting their first Capricorn Records album, *Elfin Magic*.

**Caroline Corr** on drums, bodhran, and vocals on the Corrs' debut record, *Forgiven, Not Forgotten*.

**Abe Cunningham** on Deftones' debut LP, *Adrenaline*.

**Craig Wright** working with Billy Joe Shaver.

**Bruce Moffet** on Prairie Oyster's debut, *Only One Moon* (Zoo).

Congratulations to Angie and **Robin DiMaggio** on the birth of their son, Christian Robin.

# FRANKIE BANALI FEELING THE NOISE, AGAIN

Frankie Banali hadn't spoken to Kevin DuBrow in seven years, when suddenly there was a message on his machine. DuBrow said they needed him to finish out some Quiet Riot dates that Bobby Rondinelli couldn't do. Banali did so, and then completed the tracks for an EP called *Terrified* with the band. He then re-joined the band officially to record *Down To The Bone*.

"We did the basic tracks for the whole album, including three other tracks, in two days," Frankie admits. "It wasn't because we were on a tight schedule or because of budget restrictions. We had rehearsed for two weeks. I was very well prepared when we went into Ocean Studio in Burbank, which has a great-sounding drum room. The room sounds so good that I actually didn't have any

drums in my headphones when we were recording; I was just feeding off the natural sound of the room. To use a corny phrase, it was magic.

"We recorded with everybody playing together," Frankie explains, "with the exception of 'Voodoo Groove,' which I wrote the

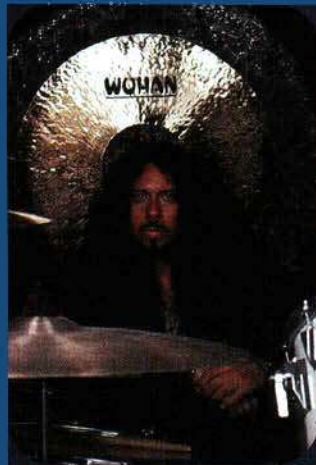
music to and opted to cut just with

[bassist] Chuck Wright. It's a little uptempo-ish, but it has a lot of movement and I wanted to make sure Chuck and I were totally locked in without having any of the wash of the guitar. But initially, we cut everything else live. We'd cut a track, I'd take fifteen minutes, and then we'd cut the next track. I needed the time between songs because I had a habit of using a lot of different snare drums, ride cymbals, and even crash cymbals and hi-hats for different tracks."

Although he says everybody has matured and it feels comfortable to be part of the band again, Banali says musically he didn't fall right back into it. "The way that I play within Quiet Riot is very backbeat—very sort of retro, late '60s early '70s," he

explains. "But the stuff I've been doing since I left the band had me playing the time a bit differently. The Gary Hoey record [Says *Who*] and the Heavy Bones stuff were done with click tracks. I did four records with W.A.S.P. and toured with them, and a lot of their music was real fast, heavy metal drumming. Everything had to be a little ahead of the beat so it would be a little edgy-sounding. With Quiet Riot, it's the opposite. When I first rejoined the band, I was playing all the same parts I had played before, but the songs didn't have that backbeat sort of feel. It took quite a few gigs to get back my old style of playing."

**Robyn Flans**



Steve Paige



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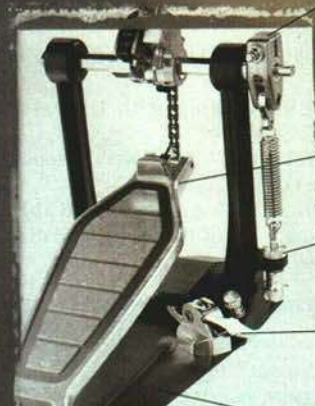
ultimate goals in mind. Faster. Smoother. More Powerful. We've also added revolutionary new features like our Power Shifter function, allowing you to slide the footboard and fine tune the action and feel. If you're totally happy with the bass drum pedal you play now, then you shouldn't even consider trying one of these at your local drum shop...we'd hate to ruin your day.



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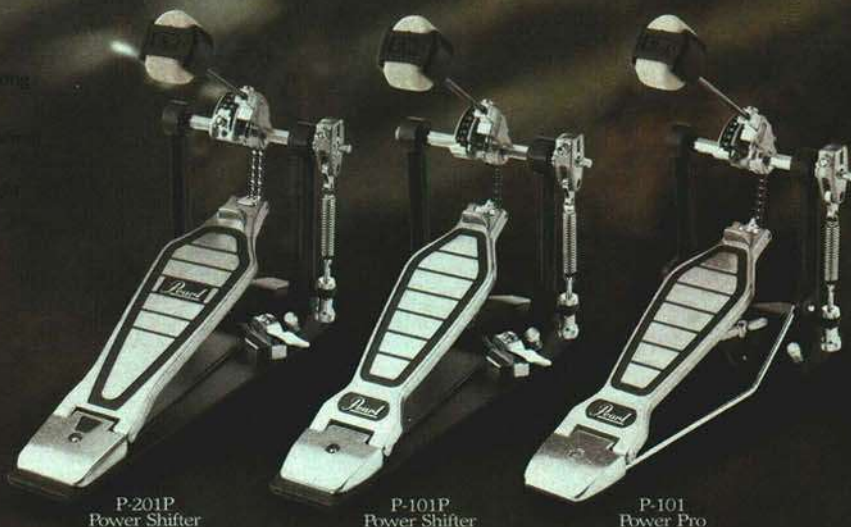
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Power Shifter

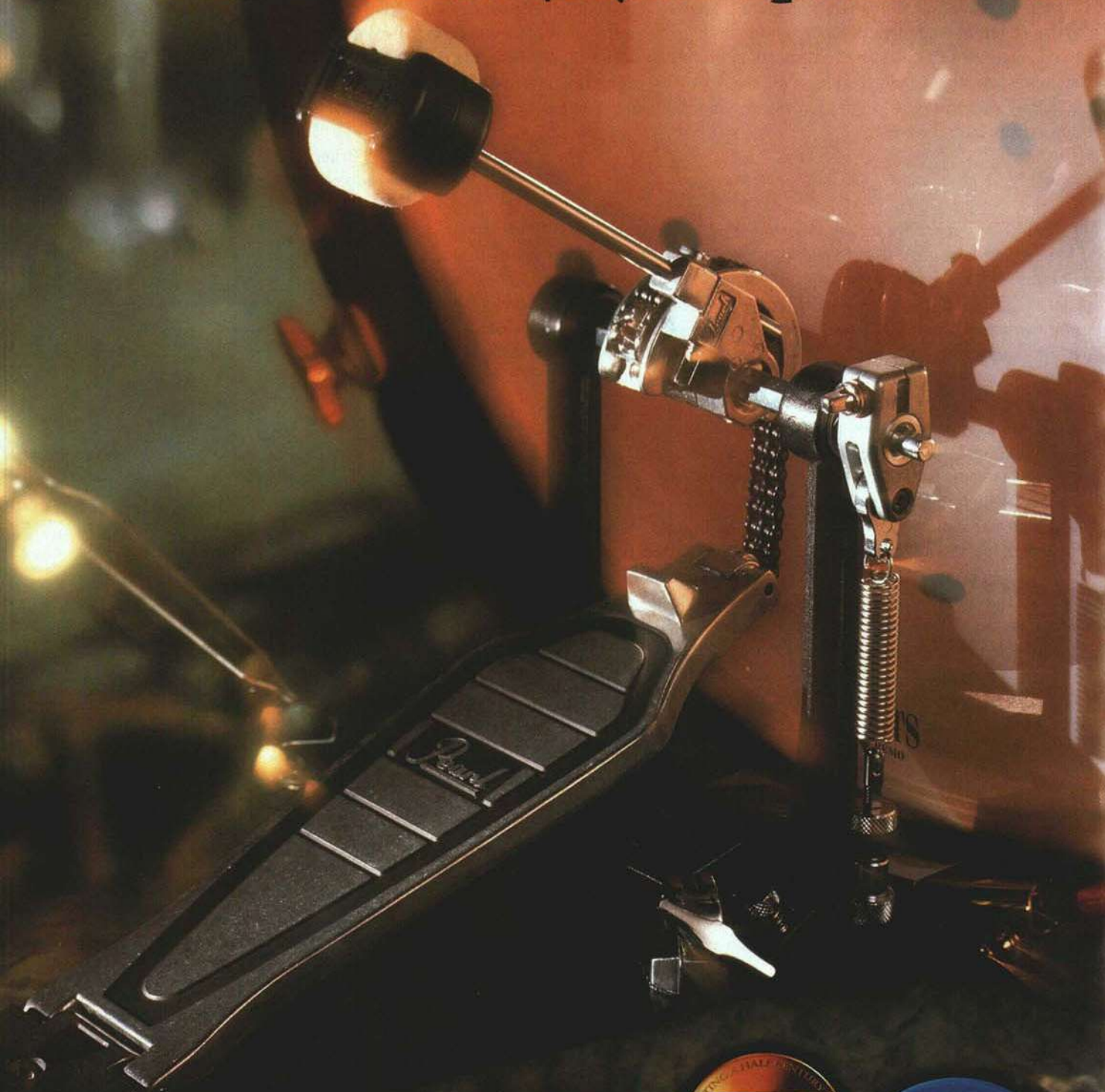
P-101P  
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P-101  
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## Chad Wackerman

**Q** Let me first start off by saying you are an *incredible* drummer. Your independence is awesome, and you are one of my drumming inspirations. I have a few questions pertaining to the drum and cymbal sounds from your album *The View*. On "Bash" you crash a gong-like cymbal on the second measure of your ostinato section. The weird-sounding drum that begins a pattern on the third measure has also caught my attention. Could you please tell me what these are? Also, how many years have you been playing? Can you outline your drum and cymbal setup, and would you tell me what albums (other than Frank Zappa's) you have recorded?



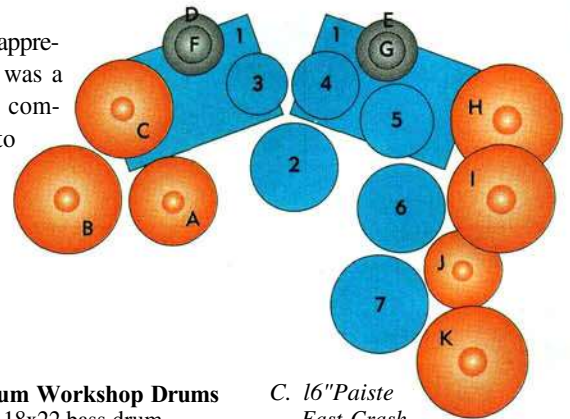
Brian Jones  
no address given

**A** Thanks very much for the compliments. I'm quite flattered, and I really appreciate your taking the time to check out the sounds on *The View*. "Bash" was a drum solo that ended up having two distinct sections. Both parts were completely improvised, but the second part has a syncopated 16th-note ostinato using two bass drums. I then decided to add some percussion to the second part by adding gongs, Chinese "jing" cymbals, various shakers, and a couple of doumbeks (Middle Eastern drums). I double the ostinato bass drum part with a doumbek starting at bar 3 of part two.

I orchestrated the percussion parts to emphasize certain accents from the drumkit, and other parts were added to create cross-rhythms. The gong you refer to is an old "wind gong" from China. It was further "effected" with a chorusing unit.

I started playing drums at the age of six, so I've played for almost thirty years so far! Besides playing on over seventeen Frank Zappa records, I've played on many of Allan Holdsworth's albums (including *Wardencllyffe Tower*, *Secrets*, *Sand*, *Atavachron*, *Metal Fatigue*, and *Road Games*), and records by Andy Summers (*Charming Snakes*, *World Gone Strange*), Steve Vai (*Flexible*), Ed Mann (*Perfect World*, *Get Up*), Barbra Streisand (*One Voice*), Tom Grant (*The View From Here*), Albert Lee (*Speechless*), and my own records: *Forty Reasons* and *The View*.

My current setup consists of Drum Workshop drums and hardware and Paiste cymbals.



### Drum Workshop Drums

1. 18x22 bass drum
2. 5x14 Edge snare
3. 8x8 tom
4. 9x10 tom
5. 10x12 tom
6. 14x14 tom
7. 16x16 tom

### Paiste Cymbals

- A. 14" Sound Formula hi-hats
- B. 18" Paiste Full Crash

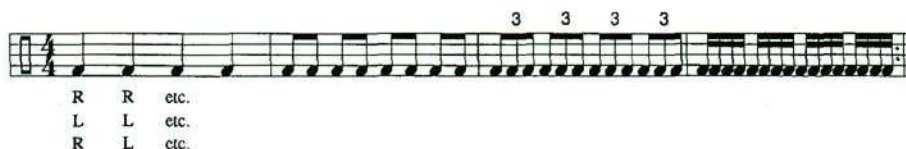
### C. 16" Paiste Fast Crash

- D. #6 cup chime
- E. #5 cup chime
- F. #4 cup chime
- G. #3 cup chime
- H. 20" Paiste Dark Full Ride
- I. 18" Paiste Fast Crash
- J. 13" Paiste Dark Crisp hi-hats (remote)
- K. 20" Paiste thin China

## Louie Bellson

**Q** I've been playing drums since the age of four, but I only started playing double bass drums about six months ago. Could you give me some tips on the best patterns and steps for improving this skill?

David Brown  
Aberdeen, WA



**A** There is a fine book called *Double Bass Drumming* by Joe Franco, which I recommend highly. Also, below is a good exercise I would suggest you practice. Start slowly at first, using a metronome to help keep your time steady and your playing even. Play the entire exercise with the right foot first, then with the left foot, and then alternating your right and left feet. Increase the tempo *only* when it is comfortable to do so.

In addition to your solo practice schedule, play as much as you can with a group. This is how you learn how to use the double bass drum *musically*. It will also help you to build dexterity and strength.





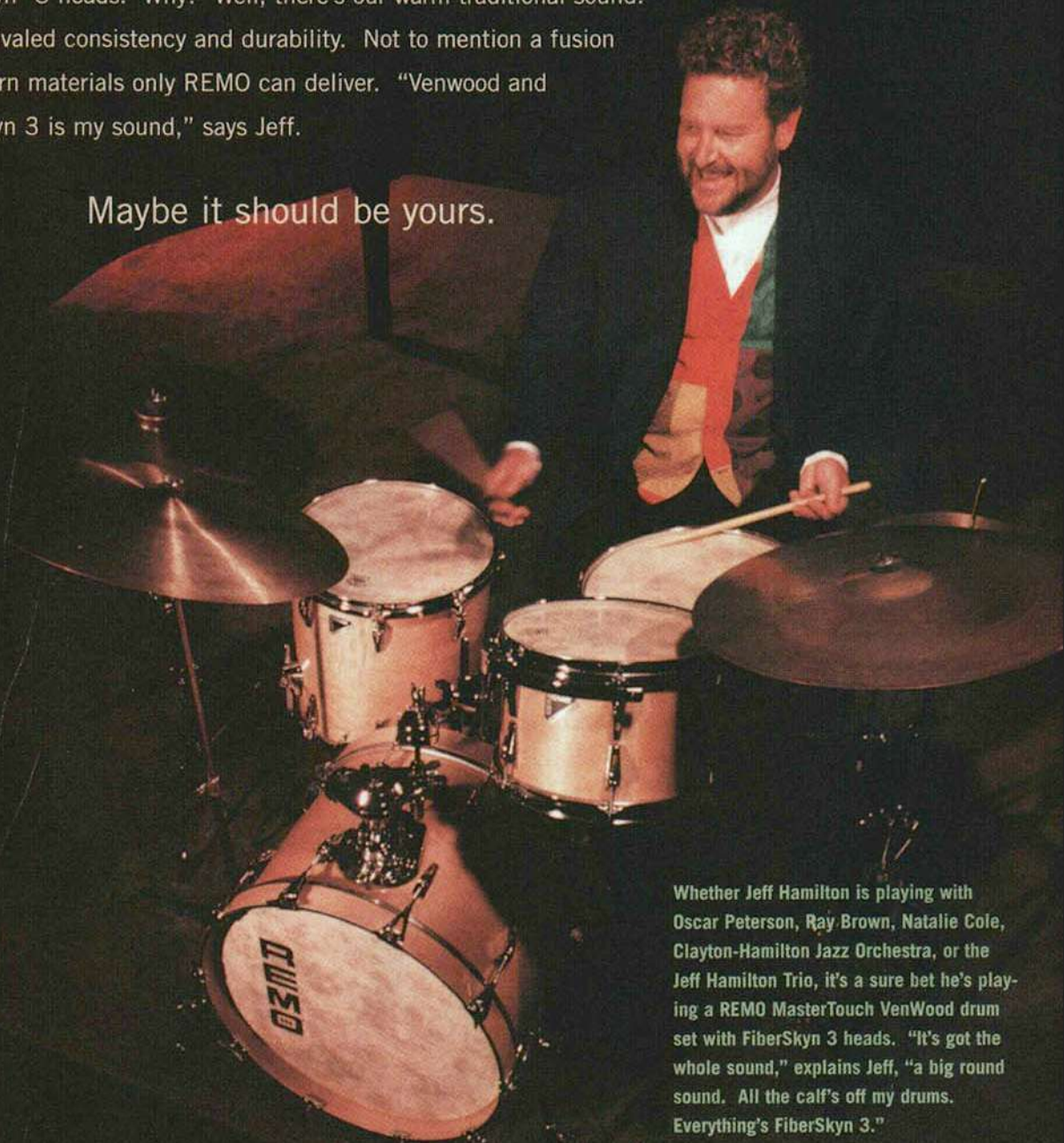
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**Richie 'Gajate' Garcia**  
(Latin Specialist,  
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**Chad Smith**  
(Red Hot Chili Peppers)





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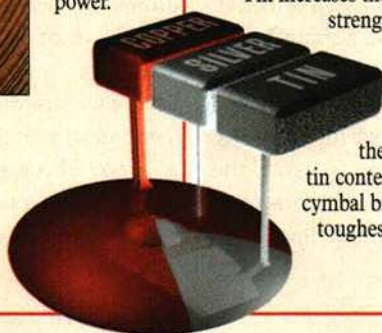
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### Sound-Proofing A Drum Room

**Q** My twelve-year-old son has been drumming for nine years. I want to build him a sound-proof room so he can drum any time he pleases. Can you give me any kind of information on how to build such a room?

Ryan  
via Internet

**A** Soundproofing a room within a home is very difficult, unless you are willing to sacrifice all other functions that the room would normally serve. In that case, the best way is to build a "room within a room," in the manner outlined in an article *MD* ran in the June 1993 issue titled "Keith DeArmond Builds His Drum Booth." If you don't have that issue, contact our back-issue department [(201) 239-4140] to obtain a copy.

If you can't use the room-within-a-room approach, the next best thing is to isolate an area of a basement or a garage—getting the sound either as far underground as possible or at least some distance from the house itself. Then you want to surround the playing area with as much sound-absorbent material as possible. Common materials are packing blankets, foam rubber pads, carpeting, and even fiberglass insulation. There are, of course, commercially available materials designed specifically for soundproofing, but they tend to be fairly expensive for use in a home project. (For example, the January *New And Notable* department carried an item on soundproofing panels available from a company called NetWell Noise Control. Those panels cost \$15 per 2'x2' section. Figuring at least an 8'x8' space for a practice area, you'd need 16 panels per wall (and the ceiling) for a total of 80 panels. At \$15 per panel, that comes to \$1,200—on top of whatever it cost you to create the walls in the first place.

The reason *MD* hasn't published the "definitive method" for soundproofing a room is that there simply isn't one. Everything depends on how much time, work, and (most especially) money you can put into the project. The basic rule of

thumb is to put the greatest possible amount of the most sound-absorbing material you can find between the drums and the outside world.

### Zilco Cymbals

**Q** I recently ran across an old cymbal that looks like a Zildjian cymbal from the days when they just engraved the words "Avedis Zildjian Company" in them. But unlike the old Zildjian As, this one has the words "Zilco AZCO Canada" engraved in it. It looks as though the lathing done was imperfect since the grooves (especially at the bell near the hole) are in concentric circles instead of the usual fashion. The cymbal sounds decent, but a colleague of mine says that it is a Zildjian reject from the late 1970s or early 1980s prior to the establishment of Sabian in Canada. Also, how did Sabian get started? Is this ZILCO cymbal the predecessor to Sabian cymbals?

Jon Hiatt  
Moorhead, MN

**A** Your colleague is correct—sort of. Zilcos were indeed made in the Canadian factory owned by Zildjian in the late '70s and early '80s. (That's where the AZCO—Avedis Zildjian Company—name comes from.) However, they were not "Zildjian rejects." They were, rather, "seconds" that were placed on the market under the Zilco brand name at a reduced price (as compared to A Zildjian cymbals). And although their price was lower, their quality level was very much in the "ear of the beholder." As you said yourself, your cymbal sounds decent—and that's what's important.

Sabian got started when brothers Armand and Robert Zildjian disagreed on how the Zildjian company should be run following the death of their father, Avedis. Robert purchased the Canadian Zildjian factory and established the Sabian brand name in 1983. (The name came from the names of his children, SALLY, BILLY, and ANDY.) He immediately started making professional-quality cymbals using the technology already in place in the factory, so it would be incorrect to say that Zilco

cymbals were the "predecessors" of Sabian cymbals.

### Effects For Recording Drums

**Q** I'm just beginning to get into some studio recording. Can you tell me what effects I might use to add definition and attack to my drums?

Miguel Afonso  
via Internet

**A** There are several types of effects and processing that can be applied to drums in the studio. However, in some cases *less* processing will get you better results than *more* processing. For example, you ask about achieving more "definition" from your drums. Definition can sometimes be *lost* if too much reverb is applied—especially on toms. The clarity of the percussive attack can be lost in the depth of the reverb. (This isn't usually a problem on snare drums, owing to their crisp, sharp nature.)

On the other hand, both definition and attack can be enhanced by the selective use of EQ. A little boost in the high end, reduction of the mids, and a slight boost in the low end will give most tom-toms better definition; added high end beyond that can add additional attack. (A little added high end will also add attack and precision to the kick drum sound.)

Gating and compression are other types of processing often applied to drums in a studio environment, but these are more to control and clean the signal than for sound modification or enhancement. Genuine effects, such as digital delay, flanging, chorus, or others that are often used with guitar or keyboard sounds are all designed to broaden, distort, or in some other way alter the original sound of the instrument—which is counterproductive in the case of drums. Proper drum tracks require precise definition of sound so that the rhythmic structure is always clear and obvious. That's why most engineers have found that some reverb on the snare—and perhaps the *slightest* bit on the toms—is about all the processing that is appropriate.

For a more in-depth discussion of the use



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Isn't today's music – and *your* music – just as important?



of effects in the studio, refer to Mark Parsons' *In The Studio* series "The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide," which began in the April '95 issue of *MD* and concludes next month. For specific information relating to your questions, see May '95 ("Equalization"), June '95 ("Digital Effects"), and July '95 ("Compression").

## Drumming Shoes

**Q** I observed Dennis Chambers wearing special drum shoes at the 1995 NAMM show. They were white and very similar to a drill team or dance shoe. When I asked him about the shoes, he mentioned a word that sounded like "ultimates." But I'm not sure if I heard him correctly. I've not been able to locate any company or brand name that even sounds close. Can you help me?

Rick Brothers  
Appleton, WI

**A** The word that Dennis used was not "ultimates" but "Otomix," which is a brand name for drumming shoes offered by Hart Dynamics, 609 Second Ave., Destin, FL

32541, tel: (800) 769-5335, fax: (904) 654-1455.

## Cleaning Cymbals

**Q** I'm confused as to how (or even if) I should clean my cymbals. I have a 20" Zildjian K *Custom Dry* medium ride. I'm under the impression I should not clean this cymbal, since this would affect the sound that comes with aging. I also have a pair of A *Custom* hi-hats as well as several A *Custom* crashes. Should I clean the K, the *Customs*, both, or neither? And if I do clean them, what's the best product to use so I don't harm the finish of the cymbals? Finally, what effect does cleaning cymbals have on their sound?

Frank Hendrickson  
Oceanport, NJ

**A** There is (and has been for years) a large division in the drumming world when it comes to cleaning cymbals. "Old-time" drummers (primarily from the jazz era) are the ones who started the credo of never cleaning cymbals, and thus allowing them

to "mellow with age." Today, many drummers—especially those who perform on major arena stages—want their cymbals to enhance their performance visually as well as musically. So they insist on clean, shiny cymbals.

But some of this division is actually the result of cymbal technology as it existed at the time that each philosophy was created. Back in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s, there was very little variety in terms of cymbal sizes and models. As a result, drummers went to great lengths to seek out cymbals with individual characteristics. And sometimes they sought to vary the characteristics of the cymbals they had. In those days too, music was not amplified, and drummers had to be very concerned with not overpowering the rest of the band—especially in small-group situations. This was where the preference for "mellow" or "dark" cymbals was created. No one wanted cymbals that were too bright, because they were automatically too piercing. So drummers tried to find dark-sounding cymbals to begin with, and then refused to clean them—so that they would become



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even more "mellow-sounding" as dirt built up in their tonal grooves. Some went so far as to *bury* their cymbals for a period of time to enhance this effect.

Ahh, but then came the amplified '60s. Now drummers had to fight to be heard over the sounds of the guitars and basses. Their dark, mellow cymbals didn't have the penetrating power to help them in this effort. The cymbal manufacturers started bringing out brighter-sounding lines, and drummers realized that keeping those cymbals clean and shiny maximized their projection potential. So "modern" drummers espoused cleaning their cymbals, while "traditional" or "purist" drummers eschewed that idea in favor of their beloved green-tarnished discs.

This philosophical division has really outlived its practicality in the '90s, since the cymbal manufacturers now make cymbals that offer virtually *any* acoustic quality or characteristic any drummer could desire, right off the mark. That is, if you want dark, mellow cymbals, you can *buy* them that way. The same goes for bright, loud cymbals.

Today the question of whether or not to clean one's cymbals is a matter of personal preference rather than acoustic necessity. If you start with a cymbal that has specific acoustic qualities, keeping that cymbal clean will simply maintain those original qualities. A bright cymbal that is allowed to get really dirty will mellow and darken—and will return to its original brightness when cleaned. But cleaning a cymbal that was originally *manufactured* to be dark and mellow should not make it any brighter than it was originally.

Should you clean your 20" Medium Custom Dry K Zildjian? Well, how dirty is it? How long has it been since it was in its "original" state? Those questions are important, since how you perceive the sound of the cymbal may have changed—gradually and imperceptibly—as the cymbal got dirty. If it is very dirty and you clean it, you may get the impression that the cymbal's sound has changed—when in fact it most likely will just have returned to its original acoustic quality. Was that original quality what you wanted when you bought the cymbal? If so, you should be

happy with the return to that sound after cleaning. On the other hand, if you can objectively evaluate the sound of the cymbal right now as opposed to its original sound—and you really *like* the sound now, we suggest you leave the cymbal alone. Wipe it off with a clean rag and perhaps a bit of *Windex* at the end of a gig to prevent its getting any *dirtier*, and then put it away.

Whether or not to clean A Zildjian cymbals is a little less of a quandry, since they are designed to be high-pitched and penetrating to begin with. As such, their performance should only be enhanced if you keep them clean and shiny.

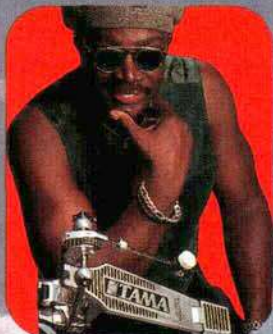
If you do choose to clean your cymbals, we suggest you start with Zildjian's own cymbal-cleaning cream. If that doesn't clean the cymbals to your satisfaction, try one of the following excellent products: *ShineOn* cymbal polish, *Buckaroo* cymbal cleaner, *Slobeat* cymbal cleaner, *DuplicateX* cymbal polish, or *Trick* cymbal & metal polish. Most if not all of these products should be available at any well-stocked drum shop.



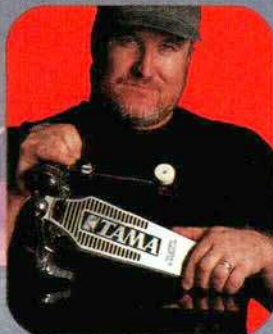
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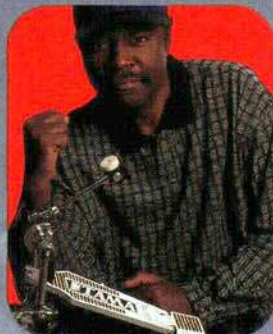
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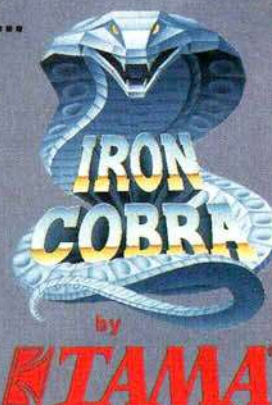
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Bryan Ferry  
Joshua Kadison



**Kirk Covington**  
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### Meinl Custom Cymbal Shop Cymbals



Roland Meinl Cymbals is offering a limited number of new cymbals with the designation *Custom Cymbal Shop*.

According to the company, rather than being a single model line, these cymbals will each have distinct characteristics based on "creative sound ideas from customers and well-kept cymbal secrets maintained over

the years within our team of professional cymbal makers."

Meinl's promotional literature states, "The possibilities of how to make a *Custom Cymbal Shop* cymbal are endless. Just about any different process of work influences the sonority of each cymbal." The new cymbals will feature variations including bells that are hand-forged—as well as hot- or cold-molded—hand-hammering, special lathing, and either satin or gloss finishes. Choices between bronze, brass, nickelsilver, and special alloys—with thin, medium, and heavy thicknesses—are possible, as are diameters from 6" to 26" (including odd sizes like 9", 19", and 21").

According to Meinl, "The hand-made manufacturing and time-consuming process guarantees a unique individual characteristic for each cymbal. **Roland Meinl Musikinstrumente, An den Herrenbergen 24, 91413 Neustadt a.d. Aisch, Germany, tel: 011-49-9161 7880, fax: 011-49-9161 5802 or Meinl U.S., 20301 Elkwood St., Canoga Park, CA 91306, tel/fax: (818) 772-6543.**

### JG Custom Juniors

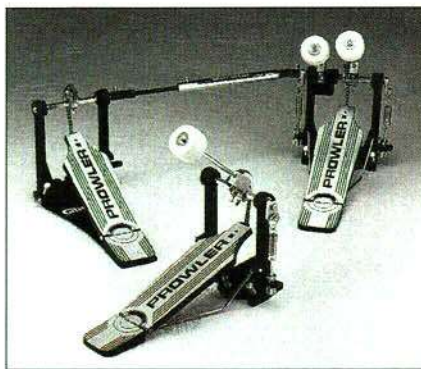
For those who seek custom-built drums but can't afford custom-sized price tags, JC's Custom Drumshop now offers JC Custom Juniors. The drums feature the same quality shells as the company's top-of-



the-line custom drums (although in 6-ply only), the same precise 45° bearing edges, and the same PureCussion RIMS mounts. The lower price is made possible by the use of low-mass lugs, lighter-duty rims, and a satin hand-rubbed finish. (High-gloss polyurethane finishes can be done at extra cost.) **JC's Custom Drumshop, 1669 E. Auburn Rd., Rochester Hills, MI 48397, tel: (810) 852-3660, fax: (810) 852-3723.**

### New Gibraltar Products

Among several new Gibraltar hardware products introduced recently are *Prowler* series bass drum pedals. The *Prowler* is an all-new intermediate series designed to be lightweight, and pedals are available in single and right-play double configurations. The pedals feature the same straight-line pedal frame and smaller, lighter pedal board found on the *Avenger* series. In addition, each *Prowler* pedal features a new single-chain "dual drive" mechanism—featuring a half sprocket and half non-toothed cam design said to give the pedal a smooth, "fluid-like" feel. This new series replaces Gibraltar's 7500 series pedals, completing a total revision of the Gibraltar pedal line begun in 1994. Suggested list price for the single pedal (*GPS*) is \$125; the double pedal (*GPDP*) sells for \$319.50.



Suggested retail price is \$495.50.

The 9507 dual-spring hi-hat now has a fully rotatable leg base, allowing it to accommodate double bass drum pedals. The part number has been changed to *9507DML*. Also available is a two-leg version—designated the *9507DL*—with a rock plate for additional stability. Both models are priced at \$169.50.

Gibraltar has also created the *Ultra Adjust System*, an all-new adjustment mechanism that allows tight and accurate adjustments over a 360° angle. The *UAS* will be used on several Gibraltar accessories to expand their adjustability and increase their ease of use.

These include all 7500 and 9500 snare stands, *Road* series and *Spanner* series adjustable angle clamps, and 7/8"-diameter tom arms. **Kaman Music Corp., Attn: Gibraltar Hardware, P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002-0507, tel: (203) 243-7941, fax: (203) 243-7102.**



Gibraltar rack models now include the *GRS-350C*—a compact *Road Series* rack with curved front, left-side, and right-side sections. The rack is designed to accommodate a 6- to 7-piece set (with bass drums up to 22" in diameter) with six to eight cymbals.



## Acoustical Consultants

For those desperately seeking information on sound-proofing spaces within their homes, Acoustical Consultants of America offers a fully automated acoustical consultation service. This touch-tone program is designed to educate the caller in terms of product awareness, installation techniques, supplier identification, and acoustic strategy for new building, re-modeling, or retro-fitting applications. The program is available by calling (900) 89-NOISE. For \$2.98 per minute a short series of touch-tone answers can lead the caller to a variety of specific how-to instructions. A full list of product suppliers, government agencies, consumer hotline numbers, and more are also available at the conclusion of the program—along with free literature from more than a dozen acoustic suppliers. An average call will last less than five minutes, according to the company—making hundreds of dollars worth of expensive on-site acoustical consultation available for less than \$15. **Acoustical Consultants of America, P.O. Box 67, Minneapolis, MN 55343-0067.**

## International Percussion Imports

International Percussion Imports (IPI) is a new importer of world percussion instruments. The company seeks to "aggressively meet the needs of percussion customers" by "consistently emphasizing innovation, operational excellence, and the highest quality in everything we do." The company hopes further to promote percussion manufacturing among world artisans by "Respecting ethnic percussionists as individuals and providing opportunities for their professional and personal development by purchasing their hand-crafted products." **International Percussion Imports, P.O. Box 24017, Santa Barbara, CA 93121-4017, tel: (800) 418-9793, fax: (805) 569-9810.**

## Clear-Sonic Acoustic Panels



If you want to lower your drum volume without hiding your good looks, *Clear-Sonic* panels might be for you. They're aluminum-framed, portable clear *Plexiglas* panels designed for stage or studio use where a reduction in forward-projected sound energy is desirable but visibility and attractive aesthetics are critical.

Standard panels are

30"x60" in size and are constructed using stainless-steel hinges and fasteners as well as steel brackets to reinforce the corners. Aluminum handles and both male and female hinges are mounted on each panel. Standard panels list for \$199; other sizes—as well as heavy-duty covers and corner cut-outs for cables—are optional at additional cost. **Accusonics Mfg., 20221 Shipley Terrace #301, Germantown, MD 20874, (800) 888-6360.**

## Garwood In-Ear Monitoring Systems

Garwood Communications makes the *Radio Station* wireless in-ear monitoring systems currently in use by top concert performers in every field. These systems are sophisticated and correspondingly expensive, so Garwood now offers two new in-ear systems designed to be more affordable for musicians who aren't playing arenas but who still desire the benefits of in-ear monitoring.

The *PRSH* wireless system is comprised of a transmitter unit and a beltpack receiver. The transmitter is free-standing or may be



rack-mounted using an optional kit that enables two systems to be mounted side-by-side in a single rack space. The unit offers full stereo transmission on a single frequency. The beltpack receiver—which comes complete with Garwood's

*IEMII* dedicated molded earpieces—is a high-sensitivity unit providing stable reception, studio-quality audio to the user, and built-in noise reduction. Output volume can be controlled by the artist from the beltpack receiver.

For those who don't need the advantages of wireless monitoring (such as drummers who remain seated throughout their performances)



Garwood offers the *M-Pack*, a hard-wired belt-pack system that incorporates a pre-set compressor/limiter. Instead of a wireless belt-pack receiver, the *M-Pack* is connected by cable to any line-

level mix source. The unit is said to deliver all of the audio quality of the *PRSH* into its *IEMII* molded earpieces, along with the same safety features (such as artist-controlled volume and integrated protection circuitry). **Garwood Communications, Inc., 176 Norman Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11222, tel: (718) 383-5606, fax: (718) 383-8004.**

## Erskine Launches CD Label

Peter Erskine has founded a new CD label called Fuzzy Music. According to Peter, "'Fuzzy' music, understood and used in the best sense, signifies good music that may defy categorization, yet has insular or perhaps universal appeal. Our name reflects our belief that whether in music or in life itself, everything is a matter of degree—a *continuum* in which there are multivalues rather than precise delineations. Sometimes there are no hard lines or boundaries that can qualify or quantify one music as 'jazz' and another as 'easy listening,' 'adult-oriented,' 'contemporary,' or whatever. Many artists find themselves dipping into rich cultural pools of musical styles, beliefs, and realities that do not fit into the large,



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corporate/record company way of thought or aesthetics. The only way to make some of this music available was to start our own company. Fuzzy Music has been created and is offered to you in a spirit of creativity and conscience, with our promise to strive earnestly to find and produce the best quality music we know how."

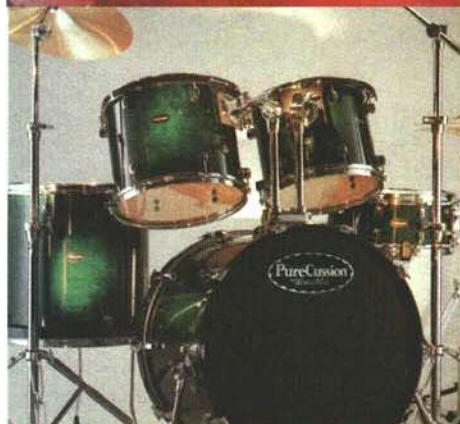
Initial releases from the new company include *All About Love* (Peter Erskine presents Joe Mazzone), *Beach Ball* (Dirk K.), and *From Kenton To Now* (Peter Erskine & Richard Torres). For further information contact **Fuzzy Music**, P.O. Box 3249, Santa Monica, CA 90408, fax: (310) 399-0473, e-mail: 74211,220 (CompuServe) or [erskoman@aol.com](mailto:erskoman@aol.com).

## Vintage Claw Hooks For Snare Drums

Newly manufactured vintage-style claw hooks for snare drums are now available in limited quantity from Valley Pro Percussion. The hooks are made of high-quality bronze and plated in nickel, chrome, or 24K gold. Prices differ according to quantity. Valley Pro Percussion also offers custom fabrication of vintage-style, steam-bent, one-piece drumshells and vintage-style replacement parts. Additionally, they repair de-laminated ply shells, custom-cut bearing edges and snare beds, and re-finish shells. **Valley Pro Percussion**, Box 27, One Cottage St., Easthampton, MA 01027, (413) 529-2319.



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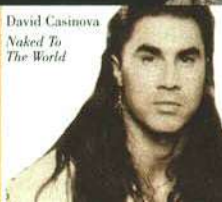


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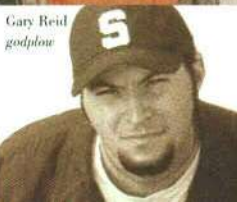
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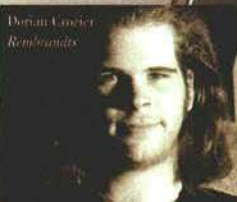
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*Naked To The World*



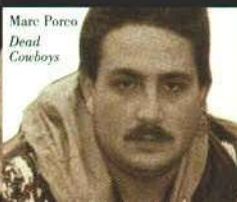
Gary Reid  
*godplow*



Dorian Comer  
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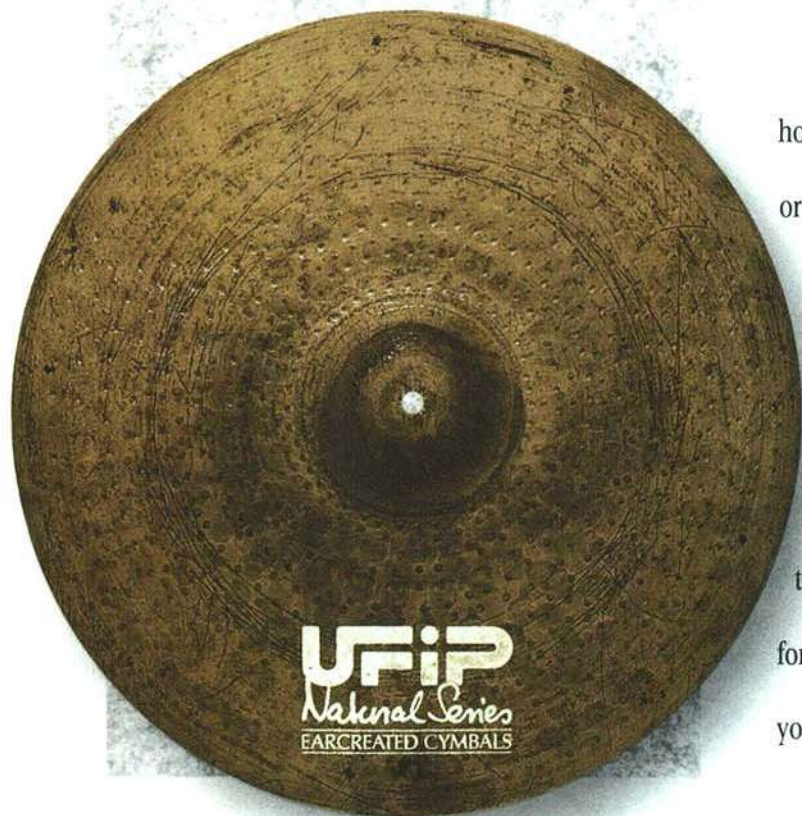


Kurtis Lombino  
*Launch Other*





# If you're looking for new cymbals, your eyes are the last things you should trust.



It seems fairly obvious that you can't tell how a cymbal sounds merely by what it's called or the way it looks. The ear is the ultimate measure when a cymbal is played. This is why, at UFIP, the ear is also the ultimate measure when a cymbal is made. So while some players may believe in picking cymbals with their eyes and not their ears, if you're looking for the best sounding cymbals you have to trust your ears and not your eyes.

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# Fibes Drums

by Rick Van Horn

## From out of the past comes a new drumkit contender.

To begin this review, a little history is in order. The Fibes drum company was originally founded around thirty years ago by Bob Grauso (a professional drummer) and John Morena (a specialist in chemical composites and also a drummer). The company offered fiberglass and clear acrylic drums, and the line became quite popular. Buddy Rich favored a Fibes *SFT* snare drum (even while endorsing other brands), and Billy Cobham gained early promi-

nence behind a clear acrylic Fibes kit.

In the '70s Grauso and Morena sold the company to the C.F. Martin Organization, who were famous for their acoustic guitars. Martin operated the company for another ten years, but did not place a high priority on drum manufacturing. In the face of overseas competition, the Fibes brand declined in popularity. In 1979 Martin sold the fixtures and tooling to Jim Corder, who renamed the business Corder Drums. (Corder drums were reviewed in the November '90 *MD*.) The Fibes name was sold to another party, who had an agreement with Martin to distribute Fibes drumsticks.

In 1990, Corder sold the company to Sammy Darwin, who renamed the company yet again. Darwin drums were manufactured and sold until early 1994, at which point the company's activities were put on hold.

Enter Tommy Robertson, the operator of a drum shop in Austin,

Texas. When he learned of the status of the Darwin Drums, he began negotiations to purchase the company. The deal was concluded in December of 1994, and the factory operations were moved to a new facility in Austin. Robertson was also able to purchase the Fibes trademark at the same time—reuniting the product with its original name.

It took about a year for the "new" Fibes to get fully operational. (Drums were first displayed at the 1995 summer NAMM show in Nashville.) But now the company has everything in place, and a fine old American drum brand is once again ready to challenge the competition.

Of course, things aren't *exactly* the same today as they were originally. For example, as soon as Jim Corder bought the Fibes company in 1979, he came to the conclusion that fiberglass was a difficult material to work with. So Corder (and subsequently Darwin)





drums were made with all-maple shells. Today's Fibes bass drums and tom-toms continue that policy. However, snare drums are available with both fiberglass and clear acrylic shells as well as maple.

For our review we were sent a six-piece kit consisting of a 16x22 bass drum, 8x10, 10x12, 12x14, and 14x16 toms (all suspended using RIMS mounts), and a 5 1/2x14 wood snare drum. A 5 1/2x14 clear acrylic (*Crystalite*) snare was also sent for test purposes. All of the toms were fitted with clear Remo *Emperor* batter heads and *Ambassador* bottom heads, the snare drums were equipped with coated *Ambassador* batters, and the bass drum had a Remo *Powerstroke 3* batter and an *Ebony* single-ply front logo head with no hole. Fibes offers no stands, so we employed a Gibraltar rack to mount and test the drums.



### Construction And Appearance

All Fibes wood drums feature six-ply maple shells with no reinforcing hoops. The shells are supplied by Jasper Wood Products of Jasper, Indiana. (If this combination sounds familiar to anyone, it may be because Gretsch drums featured the same shell design and the same shell source for many years.) Snares and toms feature triple-flanged steel hoops; bass drums are fitted with wood hoops and tensioned by means of traditional T- rods.

The drums are hand-made, including a fifteen-step hand-rubbing process for all lacquer finishes. The finish on our test kit was a ruby red lacquer with the natural grain of the maple showing through. I've always been partial to red finishes, and I found this one rich, deep, and exceptionally attractive.

The design of the lugs on our test drums has remained consistent throughout all the Fibes/Corder/Darwin/Fibes incarnations. It's a sort of diamond shape with inward-curved sides. Whether you find it attractive or not will be a matter of personal taste, but it certainly doesn't look like anybody else's lug. For that reason, the drums are visually unique and immediately identifiable.

In a nice design touch, the mounting brackets for tom-toms and floor-tom legs are simply larger versions of the lugs. This gives a nice consistency to all the fittings on the drums. On the other hand, the wing nuts that tightened those mounts on our test kit featured a pebbled, satin finish—which was totally *inconsistent* with the smooth chrome on everything else. The situation seemed so incon-

gruous that I asked Fibes' Mike Morse about it. He told me that the problem was the unusual size of the bolt used in the mounting bracket—something the current company inherited with all of the Fibes tooling. No chromed wing nuts are available on today's market to fit that bolt. However, Fibes has already re-tooled the mount, and all future wing nuts will conform to the shape (and chrome plating) now used for the bass drum T- rods.

Fibes' spring-loaded "floating" bass drum spurs are another holdover from the original late-'60s design, and are unlike any other spurs I've ever seen. Instead of rotating back against the shell (or disappearing into it) for packup, the spurs are designed to be removed from the drum completely. A small receiving bracket is all that is attached to the shell—much as a standard drum lug would be. The spring-loaded end of the spur is inserted into this bracket and rotated to snap into place. A wingnut is provided to add further security and keep the spur from rattling. The bracket points the spurs down and slightly forward for optimum grip.

The spurs themselves are extremely simple: They're 7 1/4"-long, 9/16"-diameter tubes threaded at one end. Into that end fits a 2 1/4"-long shaft spiked at one end and threaded for about 1 1/4". To adjust the overall length of the spur, you just screw that threaded shaft in or out. There is no memory lock, no wing nut—no nothing. On the other hand, there's no particular reason why the adjustment should ever change once you've set it, so why should there be all that extra stuff? In any case, the spur system held the bass drum very well against some pretty hard stomping during my test playing.

I have only two criticisms of Fibes' simplistic spurs. The first is that the spur-length adjustment is pretty limited. Drummers who really like to elevate the front of their bass drum might be out of luck. Second, the way that the spurs convert from rubber tip to spike tip is a bit *too* simplistic: The rubber feet are simply "caps" that fit over the spikes. In order to expose the spikes, these caps must be removed and set aside (making them easy to lose). On the other hand, if they are actually used on the spurs, the caps are subject to being penetrated by the spikes. (Steel washers are fitted inside the caps to prevent this, but I have my doubts about their long-term effectiveness.) Again, this is a minor problem, since the

#### WHAT'S HOT

- excellent acoustic versatility
- beautiful finish
- attractive pricing
- Crystalite acrylic snare has unique character

#### WHAT'S NOT

- no memory collars on tom mounts
- spikes on bass drum spurs can penetrate rubber tips



vast majority of drummers play on drum rugs or carpeted stages and would most likely use the spikes exclusively. But if you're not in that majority, you might want to keep some spare rubber tips for your spurs.

I was surprised to see no memory locks of any kind on the L-arms that support the toms. Although they weren't included in the Fibes fittings of the '70s, memory collars have become essential items on today's kits. It shouldn't be difficult to cast or machine a small part that would conform to the shape of the Fibes tom mount in order to lock the position of the drum on the L-arm. It would certainly make the tom mount more user-friendly.

### Toms And Bass Drum Sound

Based on my experience reviewing other brands of drums, I've come to accept the premise that a thin-shelled drum with reinforcing hoops will produce greater depth and tone than a thick-shelled drum without hoops (given the same head selection). Conversely, the thick-shelled/non-hoop drum will produce more high end, attack, and clarity. You can take advantage of these characteristics (or overcome them) by means of your head selection. The Fibes six-ply shells are not what I would call "thick," but neither are they as thin as the shells of some other drums with hoops. Actually, they fall somewhere in the middle—which is what gives them their magic.

I played the kit first with the heads that came on the drums (and also with a set of Evans G2 heads). The toms dropped into low gear, producing deep, fat, punchy tones and a real *bigness* in the sound. I played the bass drum with a small muffling pillow touching only the front head—and with no hole in that head. The sound was absolutely cavernous.

When I put thinner heads on the kit (I tried both Remo *Ambassadors* and Evans *Uno 58s*) I got a sound that reminded me of a '65 Gretsch kit I played for years. It was sensitive, responsive, bright, and cutting—yet there was still an unmistakable underlying warmth. The thinner heads didn't give me the bass drum depth I'm partial to, so I'd still use thicker heads on that drum no matter which tom heads were used. But other than that, the combination of thin heads and the Fibes shell design just might offer drummers historic tom-tom and bass-drum sounds that haven't been heard for a lot of years.

### SFT Snare Drums

Both of the Fibes snare drums we reviewed featured the company's unique *SFT* snare strainer. The butt plate features an adjustment by means of which the snares can be raised or lowered in relation to the snare-side drumhead. This aids in fine-tuning the snare sensitivity. At the opposite side of the snares, the throwoff drops the snare wires away while still keeping them under tension—thus making sure that they keep the same tension when they are returned to the "on" position. (This constant tension does make the throwoff action a little stiff.) Snare tension is adjusted by means of a large metal dial at the bottom of the throwoff. Overall, the *SFT* strainer provides excellent, reliable snare adjustment and sensitivity in a simple mechanical package.

The 5 1/2x14 maple-shell snare performed in a journeyman fashion—owing to the versatility of the Fibes shell design. I played it with its original Remo *Ambassador* batter and also an Evans *Uno*

58 coated head. With either head the drum produced a fine, woody tone with good pitch range from medium-low to fairly high. (Too much tension choked the head and made the drum sound "clanky.") A thicker head gave it a little more "fatback" sound but sacrificed high end. Snare sensitivity was excellent and extremely fine-tunable (a credit to the *SFT* strainer). This would be a good all-purpose drum, as opposed to its having a unique musical personality.

Ah, but you say you *want* a unique personality in your snare drum? Well then, check out the *Crystalite* drum. Its clear acrylic shell is made by the very same company that made them for Fibes back when Billy Cobham bashed on them. And while you might think you could predict what an acrylic snare drum would sound like, I venture to say you'd be surprised. I know *I* was.

Where I expected the drum to favor high pitches, I found that it actually had as wide—or wider—an effective range as did its wooden cousin. At the extreme low end it produced a "fat" sound that still had cutting power; at the extreme high end it produced a cutting "crack" that still had underlying body.

Where I expected the drum to be bright, loud, and difficult to control, I found it sensitive and completely controllable with only a little routine muffling. (Without muffling it offered terrific sustain, should you want that.) The *Crystalite* snare *was* brighter overall than the wooden snare, and it certainly did have exceptional volume and projection. But it wasn't brash or annoying (the way some metal-shelled drums can be). It actually leaned more toward the tonality of a solid-shell wood drum—but still with a character of its own.

And you just can't get away from how *cool-looking* a see-through drum is!

### Conclusion And Prices

Fibes is attempting to give a venerable product a new lease on life. In their literature they pledge "to continually work for full end-user satisfaction and constant innovation." It's hard to fault a philosophy like that. Each drum comes with a three-year warranty to the original owner, and each is marked with a genuinely traceable serial number. And on top of all that, the drums are priced affordably.

Fibes drums are sold individually. Suggested list prices for the drums in our kit are as follows: 16x22 bass drum—\$825; 8x10 tom—\$330; 10x12 tom—\$360; 12x14 tom—\$410; 14x16 tom—\$450; 5 1/2x14 maple snare—\$425. (The *Crystalite SFT* snare drum is also priced at \$425.) The L-arms and RIMS mounts for the four toms (sold separately) add another \$333, for a grand total of \$3,133. I consider that an extremely competitive price for a drumset with the construction quality and acoustic performance offered by our review kit. You owe it to yourself to check out the new Fibes drums.



# GMS Snare Drums

by Rick Van Horn

**Want solid wood? Brass? High-tech symphonic? GMS has you covered.**

The folks at GMS have been quietly—but dramatically—expanding their operations over the past couple of years. Besides their highly regarded drumkits, they've launched into the independent hardware market with suspension mounts and drum racks. (See the following review.) They've also entered the highly competitive snare-drum field with an impressive selection of models that differ in shell material, overall design, and application. This made for a pretty exciting group of drums for us to try.

## Solid White Ash Snares

Perhaps the most unusual drums among GMS's new models are the *Solid White Ash* snares. Each drum is made of a solid piece of white ash that is steam-bent into a circular drumshell and reinforced with ash glue rings at the top and bottom. According to Tony Gallino of GMS, they chose to use ash because it has "a wider dynamic range than maple, with a little more emphasis on the high end." Ash is also thought to be more dimensionally stable, which means that the drum is more inclined to keep its altered shape rather than trying to straighten back out (and thus make the shell go out of round).

The drums are shipped with Evans *Uno 58 1000* batter heads and Evans clear *Resonant 300* snare-side heads, and they're available with either 2.3mm steel hoops or die-cast hoops. (Our 5 1/2" test model had steel hoops; the 6 1/2" drum had die-cast hoops.) They're fitted with GMS's *Grand Master Series* hardware, including lugs, snare throw-offs, and butts machined from solid brass.

(A word here about the GMS throw-off. It features a release lever that looks like a mini-version of the gear-shift lever from my mom's 1950 Nash—but is very comfortable to operate. Additionally, the snare tension adjustment screw passes through a nylon bushing. This

### WHAT'S HOT

- Solid White Ash drums offer both warmth and crispness
- Brass piccolo offers more potential for fullness than most drums its size
- 10x14 Symphonic drum offers more versatility than its size and name would indicate, and might make a great studio drum

### WHAT'S NOT

- brass drums are extremely heavy

makes the snare-tension knob a little stiff to operate, but helps to keep the snares from loosening up under heavy playing.)

Only one finish is available for the *Solid White Ash* drums: a natural oil finish that really brings out the beauty of this pale, high-grain wood. And in a unique touch the logo is burned into the wood of the shell, rather than being displayed on a metal plate attached to it.

I found the sound of the ash snares to be bright and reflective—although not quite as bright as heavier block- or segment-style solid-wood drums. Tony Gallino seems correct about ash wood favoring high frequencies; I was able to get a nice, crisp, high sound from the drum without actually cranking the head up to where it choked. In fact, the drum seemed to perform best at a medium head tension. At that point it had great snare sensitivity at all points of the batter head.





When I played the drum without muffling it *really* rang, almost like a metal-shell drum. Yet it took only a bit of muffling from a small *Zero Ring* to control that ringy sound—with no sacrifice of the inherent liveliness of the drum. And even with the muffling ring, the drum's steel hoop helped produce ringy, piercing rimshots. I liked this drum a lot.

The 6 1/2" ash drum exhibited all of the characteristics listed above—just moved down in pitch a bit. I was especially impressed with its crispness and snare sensitivity, considering its depth. (This is a feature I've seen in virtually all solid-wood snare drums.) The die-cast hoop produced slightly dryer-sounding rimshots than those produced on the steel hoops of the 5 1/2" drum.

The depth of the shell helped the 6 1/2" snare maintain a moder-

brother tips the scales at a whopping 18 1/2! (By comparison, the 6 1/2" *Solid White Ash* drum weighs 11 pounds.)

Of course, mass has a big influence on sound—and these heavy drums produce a lot of sound. Out of the box the piccolo's batter head was cranked way up. Predictably, the drum produced the classic "take-your-head-off" sound that makes brass piccolos popular as secondary snares (or even as primary snares for folks who seek cutting power from their snare drums). But that's a pretty one-dimensional sound, and I found this drum to be anything but one-dimensional. On the contrary, when I backed the tension off to where the head had a nice "give" to it under my sticks, the drum produced a *very* nice, crisp sound with much more body than I've heard from most drums of this size. It wasn't that the pitch was that much *lower*, it was just that the sound was that much *fuller*. On the other hand, when I cranked the head back up a bit, dropped the snares, and removed the muffling ring, the 3 1/2" drum gave an excellent impression of a timbale!

The 6 1/2"-deep brass drum was by no means just a lower-pitched version of the piccolo—although it did exhibit the piccolo's snare sensitivity (all the more impressive in a drum this deep). It didn't produce exceptional high end, and did not respond well at all with the batter tensioned tightly. In fact, tuning it that way sort of missed the point: What this drum has to offer is fullness and depth combined with excellent crispness and projection. It's a big drum that gets a rich

ately deep, warm tone even when the head was fairly tight. But where the drum really came into its own was when I backed the tension off. It dropped into the lower registers pitch-wise, but kept its crispness and sensitivity. Those performance characteristics would make it an excellent fatback drum. Really sweet!

The 5 1/2x14 *Solid White Ash* snare drum lists for \$1,090 with steel hoops, or \$1,250 with die-cast hoops. The 6 1/2x14 model is priced at \$1,100 with steel hoops, or \$1,260 with die-cast hoops.

### Brass Snares

GMS brass snares feature shells made from 3.75mm sheet brass that is rolled and welded. They feature the same *Grand Master Series* hardware and the same head selection as the *Solid White Ash* snares, but come with 2.3mm steel hoops as standard. They feature a brushed brass finish that's clear-coated for added luster and protection.

Brass isn't light, and by the time all of GMS's machined-brass fittings have been added to the brass shells, these babies are *heavy*. The 3 1/2" piccolo we were sent weighs in at 12 1/2 pounds; its 6 1/2"

sound with lots of power. As such, it's not as "in your face," as the piccolo. Rather, this drum is more "in your gut."

The 3 1/2x14 brass snare drum lists for \$1,225. The 6 1/2x14 model is priced at \$1,270.

### Symphonic Snares: Descriptions

GMS drew on the input they got from many of the top "legit" players in the New York City area to create their *Symphonic* line of snare drums. All of the drums feature 8-ply maple shells with a beautiful chestnut-stain/high-gloss finish. Each drum is fitted with ten *Grand Master Series* lugs and die-cast hoops. The snare throw-offs have been modified from the *Grand Master Series* design in order to accept special snare assemblies unique to these drums. (More on these later.) The throw-offs also do not feature the nylon snare-tension bushing. The theory is that these drums will not be played as hard as the other models, and that fine snare tension adjustments will be easier to achieve without the bushings. The drums are equipped with Remo's new *Fiberskyn 3 FT* batter heads, with *Diplomat* snare-side heads.





A unique feature of this series is that each size of drum has a different bearing edge to maximize its acoustic characteristics. The 5"-deep drum has the sharpest edge to enhance its crispness and high end. The edge on the 6 1/2"-deep drum is slightly rounder to achieve a warmer, more general-purpose sound. The 10"-deep drum has a completely round edge in an attempt to get a very dark tone. The bottom bearing edges on all three drums are cut sharper to maximize snare response.

Another interesting feature of the *Symphonic* snares is a thumbscrew on the snare butt that can be used to adjust the distance between the snares and the bottom head without actually changing the snare tension. Using this adjustment I was able to achieve an ultra-sensitive playing spot on the drum (for super-smooth rolls) while still maintaining a nice overall snare tension for general playing on the drum.

As I said earlier, the snares themselves are different on each drum. The 5" drum features a snare set that consists of four cables, three standard curly wires, and six braided stainless-steel cables. This combination was designed to produce "crisp response, with intense sensitivity even at *ppp* levels." The snares were designed to act like a crossover network: At very low levels you mainly hear the curly wires. As playing volume increases, the braided cables take over. At even louder levels, the other cables come in.

The 6 1/2" drum features snares with seven cables and six braided stainless-steel cables. This all-cable design is intended to give the drum a darker, guttier tone at all dynamic levels with no sacrifice in snare response. The 10" drum is fitted with six thick and six thinner cables, and uses the crossover principle again to get an even darker tonality.

These snare choices are what GMS considers optimal for each drum, but they'll happily fit any snare combination on any drum at the user's instruction. Or the user can purchase all three types of snares and change them as desired, using a simple release system on the snare butt. Tony Gallino tells me that GMS is continuing to experiment with snare combinations and will probably be offering additional versions soon for even more varied sounds.

### Symphonic Snares: Sounds

The 5x14 *Symphonic* snare's head/snare combination served to make the drum extremely articulate and responsive—even at super-soft playing levels. It also made the drum's sound much



darker, deeper, and dryer overall than either the brass or the ash drums. When played without muffling the drum was open and resonant—which would help the drum carry to the back rows of a concert hall. However, I actually preferred the dryer, muffled sound I achieved by using a small *Zero Ring*. Each individual stick strike within a fairly closed roll was clearly audible and distinct.

The 6 1/2" *Symphonic* drum was essentially a deeper-voiced version of the 5x14. The most significant difference I noticed was that the snare sensitivity on this drum was a little reduced. It was best when the drum was played at dead center.

The 10" *Symphonic* drum was my favorite among this group. It offered *surprisingly* good snare response despite its extreme depth; the snares were still crisp and clear at *ppp* playing. Additionally, the drum responded dramatically to the slightest adjustment of snare tension—totally changing the character of the sound.

While this drum is obviously intended for use in mid to low pitch ranges (as for orchestral parts calling for a "field drum"), I experimented with tensioning the batter head up tightly just to see what would happen. I was very impressed with the drum's performance. It sounded crisp and articulate—but still *very big*. Besides its intended orchestral applications, I could easily see this drum as a marvelous studio instrument—especially with its ability to utilize the different types of snares offered by GMS. My thinking is that putting a set of wire snares on this baby would create a back-beat drum of monumental sonic proportions.

*Symphonic* series snares are priced as follows: 5x14—\$1,100; 6 1/2x14—\$1,120; 10x14—\$1,210. Replacement snare sets (and future combinations) should retail for around \$60.



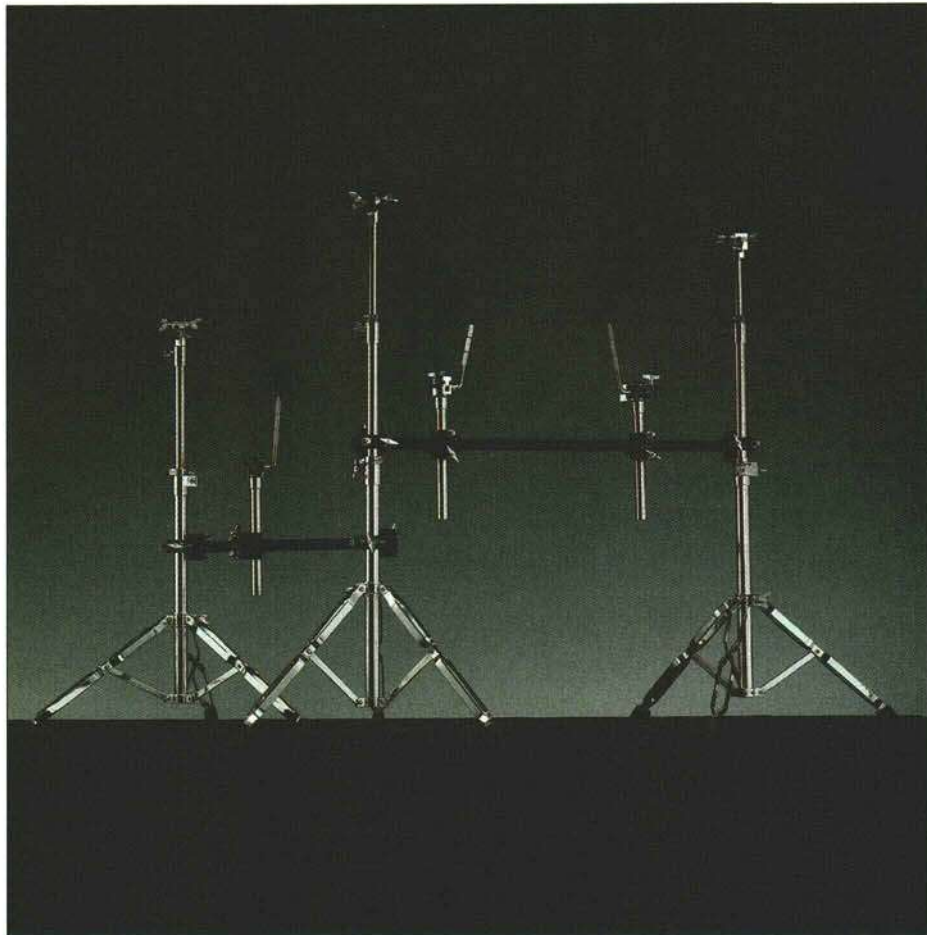
# GMS Drum Racks

by Rick Van Horn

GMS is now offering a component drum rack system for use with any brand of drums. The "components" consist of various lengths of solid-aluminum hexagonal bar stock, along with block-style 90° multi-clamps. The system isn't free-standing, but rather is designed to be used in conjunction with a drummer's cymbal and drum stands.

The key feature of the GMS system is the hexagonal shape of the bars. This shape mates perfectly with the clamps, creating an absolutely secure grip. Even though the 1" bars are significantly smaller in size than the tubular or square bars employed by various other drum-rack brands, their hexagonal shape completely eliminates the possibility of the clamps slipping.

In order to gain this security, however, the hexagonal bars do sacrifice a good deal of positioning flexibility. Owing to the hex shape, clamps can only be attached to the bars at 60° increments. Realistically, this means that cymbal booms and tom arms can only come off of the bars vertically (since 60° forward or backward from vertical wouldn't be very practical). There is no possibility of the infinite angling adjustment offered by a tubular rack—nor even of coming off of the bars horizontally as one can with a square rack. Admittedly this is a limitation that a majority of drummers would have no problem with. But if you're the type of player who likes to load a rack up with goodies in any and all conceivable positions, you should know that you are going to have to deal with this limitation.



## WHAT'S HOT

- extremely compact and inconspicuous bars
- hexagonal bars mate with clamps for totally secure grip
- only one style of clamp necessary

## WHAT'S NOT

- hexagonal bar shape offers limited positioning options
- black finish will not match chromed stands
- longer bar lengths should be offered

The bars currently available in the GMS system are 28", 36", and 40" long—which are handy sizes, to be sure. But I found it tough to fit three rack toms (any bigger than an 8"/10"/12" combination) across a 22" bass drum using the 40" bar. There was also very little "maneuvering room" for tripod legs on either side of the bass drum. I'd suggest that GMS add 48" and 54" lengths to its selection to accommodate setups with more numerous and/or larger drums.

The 1" thickness of the GMS bars helps them keep a low profile when it comes to the visual aspect of the setup. But more importantly it makes the bars more compact than those of other brands. Because they are solid aluminum the bars may not be substantially *lighter* than the hollow bars used by others, but they will certainly take up less space in a trap bag or case.

Both the bars and the clamps in the GMS system are anodized black—giving them a subdued and inconspicuous appearance that would work well with any drum finish. The down side of that is that virtually nobody has black anodized drum and cymbal stands, so there will be a visual mis-match on that score.

One cautionary word should be added regarding the GMS rack system—or *any* system that combines rack bars with existing

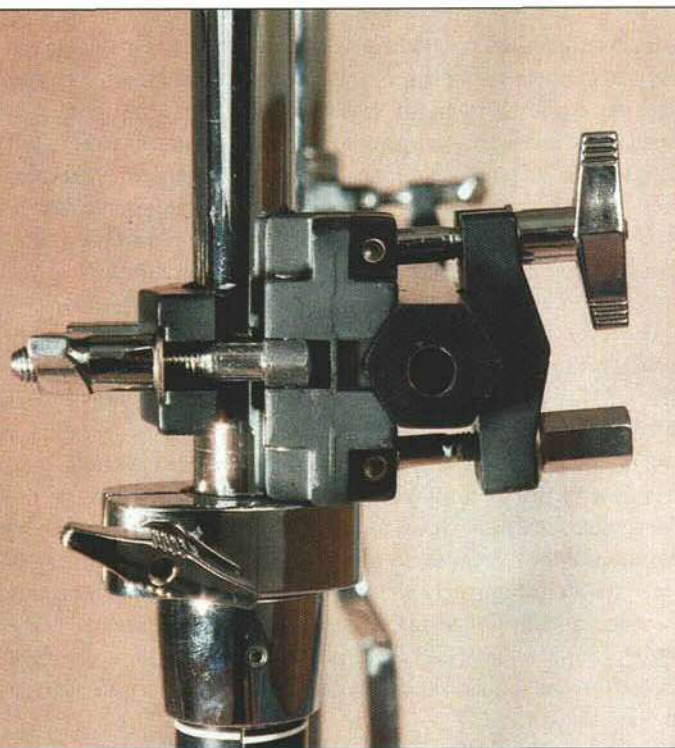


stands. In order to achieve a setup that can be repeated accurately and quickly every time, those existing stands *must* be carefully marked and/or memory locked at *all* adjustment points (such as tripod spread and section heights). It's also helpful if the positions of all the tripod feet are marked on the drummer's rug to further ensure proper stand positioning. Without these precautions a rack/stand combination system can become *more* difficult to work with than individual stands would be.

Another thing to remember with a system of this type is that each bar requires two clamps just to attach it to a stand at either end. *Then* you start figuring how many clamps you'll need to mount your drums and cymbals to the bar. It's important to figure the correct number of clamps into your budget.

Which brings us to the prices for the GMS components. A 40" "Basic Bridge" (one bar and four clamps) is priced at \$210. A 36" "Side Bar" (one bar and three clamps) goes for \$170, while a 28" "Side Bar" (also with three clamps) costs \$165. Individually, the 28", 36", and 40" bars are priced at \$45, \$50, and \$55 respectively. Clamps sell for \$40 apiece. (That may seem pricey as compared to the bars. But each clamp is created from many different parts that require a great deal of machining to produce, while the bar stock is created essentially in one milling operation.)

The GMS rack system offers a very viable alternative to other racks on the market, both in terms of function and appearance. It has some limitations in positioning, but they may be considered



This end-on view illustrates how GMS's hexagonal bars mate perfectly with their clamps.

offset by the advantages of grip security and compact size. With the addition of the longer bar lengths suggested earlier, I'd consider the GMS system an excellent choice.

## Yamaha Peter Erskine Stick Bag

by Rick Van Horn

Once upon a time Peter Erskine was playing his drums with his stick bag draped from his floor tom. He noticed that hanging a full bag of sticks on the drum significantly reduced that drum's resonance and projection. So he took the bag off the drum and started looking for another place to put it. About the only thing he could think of was to place the bag on the ground and lean it against his hi-hat stand, his stool, or the floor tom. None of these was convenient, and again the drum's sound was affected. "What I need," thought our hero, "is a bag that will stand up by itself." Peter took his idea to Yamaha, who thought it innovative enough to pursue. The result is the free-standing *Peter Erskine Signature* stick bag.

Here are the basic features in a nutshell: The bag measures 15" long, 9" wide, and 4" deep (when zipped closed). It's made of heavy-duty black cordura material, with inner pockets in turquoise blue and handles trimmed in purple to match





Yamaha's current color scheme. When opened, each side of the bag has multiple stick pockets at the bottom and a zippered pocket opening at the top. One of those pockets is 7" deep to contain small tools, tapes, CDs, or perhaps your wallet; the other is the full 15" deep to accommodate longer items. At the top of the center section of the opened bag—the "spine"—is an adjustable *Velcro* strap for securing your wristwatch. In the middle is a webbed strap with a single loop specifically designed for a drumkey. Near the bottom there's a plastic clip-hook to hold your key ring.

However, the really innovative element of this bag is its ability to support itself. On the back of each side of the bag is a hinged panel. Release the *Velcro* straps that hold these panels in place, let them drop away from the bag, secure each panel's "foot" to a *Velcro*-equipped flap, and *voila*. You now have an A-frame support system that permits you to place the bag anywhere on the floor within reach. A clever arrangement of all the various securing straps allows them to do double-duty, so that when the bag is open the straps connect the two halves, preventing the A-frame from accidentally collapsing. The whole concept is executed beautifully, works wonderfully, and really does give you convenient access to your drumsticks at no sacrifice to any acoustic element of your drumkit.

I can see only two very minor problems with this new bag. One is that it's pretty large to begin with, and once you fill it up with sticks, mallets, tools, etc., it's going to be even bigger. So you won't be able to toss it into your trap case or equipment bag. It

### WHAT'S HOT

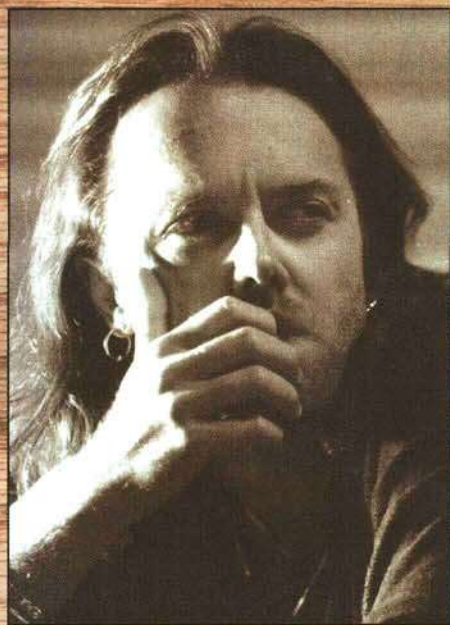
- innovative free-standing support system
- high-quality construction
- practical, well-thought-out interior design

### WHAT'S NOT

- will most likely need to be carried separately due to its size

will have to be packed and carried as a separate item. (Both a carrying handle and a shoulder strap are provided just for that purpose.) The other problem is that you do have to have at least 15" x 22" of floor space available within your setup on which to place the bag. Drummers who are completely surrounded by drums and other equipment may be out of luck—unless they want to go back to hanging the bag. (And believe it or not, hanging loops are provided for just that contingency. Peter seems to have thought of everything.)

A bag this big, made with this level of quality and incorporating this many innovative features is not going to be cheap. And at \$150, the *Peter Erskine Signature* stick bag isn't. But besides all of its self-supporting, stick-holding capabilities, it also offers the potential for dramatically improving the sound of at least one of your drums. What other stick bag can do that?



Lars Ulrich—Metallica

# Going Against the Grain

## HERE WAS MY PROBLEM:

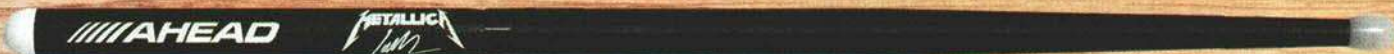
*I had broken so many wood sticks over the years that it not only affected my gig, but also seriously contributed to the demise of the world's tree population!!!*

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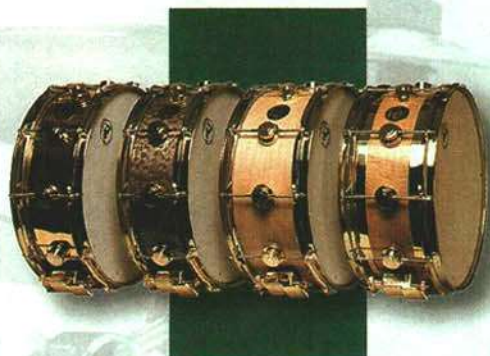
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## DW Pedals

DW's 5000 Series "Delta" hi-hat and remote hi-hat stands, plus a choice of an Accelerator or Turbo chain & sprocket or nylon-strap single or double bass drum pedal.



## DW Snare Drums

A 6x14" "Collector's" (10-6 maple) and a 5x14" "Edge" (brass/maple) from DW's Custom Snare Drum collection. Also shown above: "Vintage" (brass) and "Craviotto" (solid maple).



## DW Hardware

An assortment of DW's versatile and reliable 9000 Series cymbal, tom-tom and snare drum stands and accessories, including the all-new 9100 drum throne.



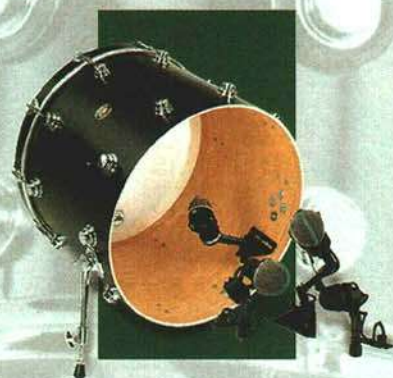
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2. Make sure your entry is postmarked by April 2, 1996.
3. You may enter as many times as you wish, but each entry must be mailed separately.
4. Winners will be notified by phone.
5. Prizes include all shipping costs.
6. Employees of Modern Drummer, Drum Workshop, UFIP, Beato, and May are ineligible.

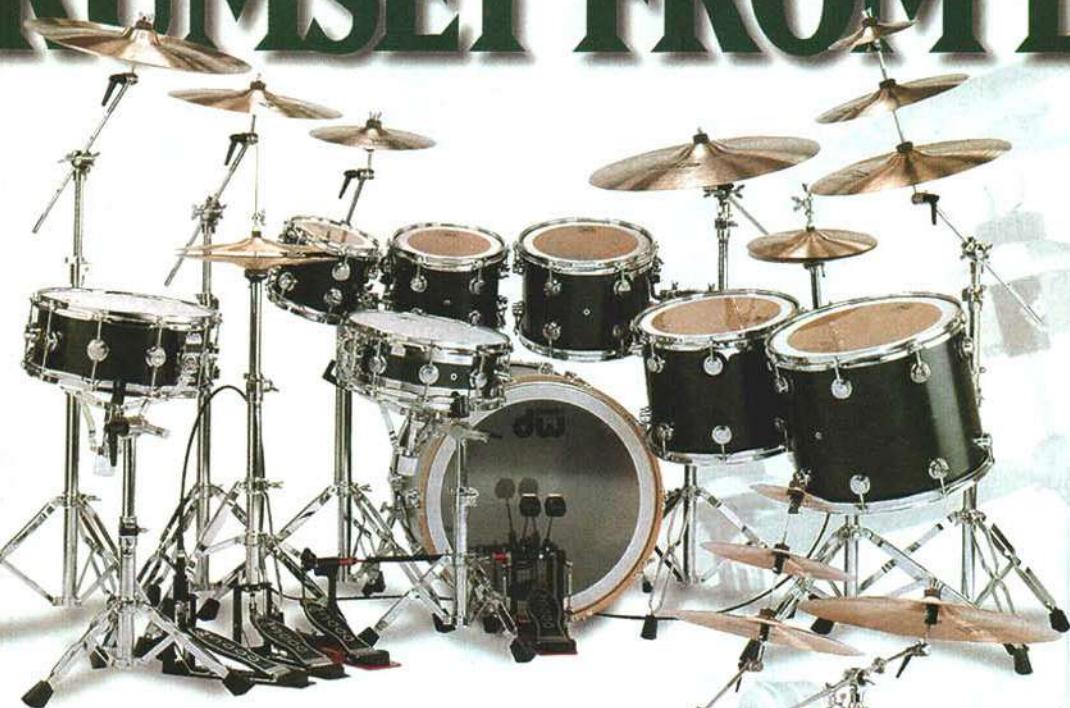
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drums  
**DW**





# Bill Stewart



# In Full Swing

John Scofield  
has a few words for  
Bill Stewart. "It's always  
the same thing with that guy,"  
says the renowned guitarist.  
"Music, music, music."

Try as an interviewer might to  
steer Stewart in the direction of technique  
and drumming concerns, the Des Moines,  
Iowa native always returns to the importance  
of musicality over chops, of interaction over  
sticking virtuosity.

Since coming east in the mid-'80s to study at  
New Jersey's William Paterson College, Bill  
Stewart's distinctive style and openness to all  
genres of jazz have earned him kudos from many  
musicians. From Scofield's bluesy straight-ahead  
to Joe Lovano's sophisticated swing, from Maceo  
Parker's R&B to Larry Goldings' "grits and  
gravy" organ funk, and from James Moody and  
Lee Konitz's bop to avant-garde work with  
Marty Ehrlich and Dave Douglas, Stewart's  
ascendancy has been swift amid New York's  
jazz community.

Stewart's drumming combination of fire  
and finesse is in stark contrast to his shy  
demeanor. On the bandstand his red  
hair falls over an intense face that

often resembles an impassioned Gene Krupa. But in conversation Stewart is reserved, carefully choosing the precise answer for each question. You can hear that depth in his drumming, sometimes surfacing in abstract punctuations of time and color over his aggressive, jabbing swing feel.

When Stewart found time to record *Snide Remarks*, his Blue Note solo debut, the choice of material was as unpredictable as his taste in music. Not content to repeat past playing experiences, Stewart's original tunes recall the dark beauty of seminal records like Miles Davis's *Nefertiti* or Wayne Shorter's *The Soothsayer*. With freedom and improvisation as the guidelines, Stewart's cast of Joe Lovano, Eddie Henderson, Bill Carrothers, and Larry Grenadier reacts to the drummer's sharp swing with warm melodicism and bristling interaction.

When I initially spoke to Bill about this article, I expressed my interest in discussing his blistering chops and sharply defined swing feel. "Technique is okay," he replied. "But after you talk to me a while you'll realize that's not what I'm really about." Indeed. Bill Stewart is really about only one thing: music, music, music.

By Ken Micallef  
Photos by Paul La Raia



**KM:** Throughout your recorded work, from Maceo Parker to John Scofield to Larry Goldings, you've largely avoided being labeled in a particular genre.

**BS:** I like to play with people who play different styles. I just try to bring whatever I can to the music to make it better. I enjoy different music; I find that it brings out different aspects of my playing. I try to be broad-minded about music. That doesn't mean that there aren't things that I won't or can't do, but I certainly don't want to be categorized. I don't want to be limited to one thing.

**KM:** In New York many drummers are called for one gig but not another, even if they can play many styles.

**BS:** That's true. Some of those guys may be only good at one thing, or maybe they only get called for one gig even if they can play other

**BS:** Sure. I grew up listening to that stuff. When I was in junior high, I listened to a lot of Aretha Franklin. I was very into Bernard Purdie, some James Brown stuff, and Ray Charles. I was into funk with a jazzy edge. I had a background in that. You think my playing in that style is more polished now?

**KM:** Yes.

**BS:** Hmm. I don't know why that is. *Roots Revisited* was recorded before I went on tour with Maceo. I found out about two days before that I was on that record date. I hadn't played that music in years. Since Maceo, I haven't been working on my funk playing, but maybe I'm just a better musician now and that enables me to do things on a higher level.



things. If things hadn't worked out when I played with Maceo Parker, people might not have thought that I could play funk, since most of my other work doesn't suggest that.

**KM:** On Larry Goldings' *Whatever It Takes* your funk drumming is even more polished and true to form than when you were with Maceo. It reminds me of the organ-trio music of the '60s with drummers such as Idris Muhammad or Mickey Roker. It's got that on-top soul sound. Isn't that a different style than when you're coming from straight-ahead?

**KM:** You're a very whole musician. You're never at a loss for the right thing to play in the diverse styles you cover. But you've got a distinctive style. Are you ever at a loss for a part?

**BS:** Occasionally. I guess I try to avoid situations where I would be at a loss. If you put me in a Brazilian samba band I might be at a loss for what to play. I'm not experienced in that music or tradition.

**KM:** Can the competence you have developed, or does it stem from natural musical ability? You had your basic tools together on the Scott Kreitzer record [*Kick'n Off*, Bill's first session].

**BS:** A lot of it is developed. It's a gradual process. I



think I have some talent, but I've worked hard on certain aspects of my playing, especially in the years when I first came to the East Coast to study at William Paterson College. I practiced a lot and spent time thinking about my deficiencies.

**KM:** What were those areas?

**BS:** [long pause] At certain stages I would work on tempos I was having problems with. I didn't use a metronome then, although I do now, usually to check myself. If I'm playing a tempo for fifteen minutes I'll start the tempo with the metronome, turn it off and play a while, then check and see where the meter is.

I worked on every aspect of my playing, but especially on getting a good sound, which comes from experience and hearing yourself on recordings. You figure out what snare sound is right. I spent time on brush playing—they're hard to play. In general I play brushes with my left hand moving in a counter-clockwise motion and my right hand moving clockwise.

But I think the key is that I had a lot of experience playing with people—



**"I'm aware that there are things I do that are unique to me, and there are some things I've gotten from other drummers that are not unique at all. Those that are unique I try to develop; maybe that's how an individual style is formed. You find your own slant."**

that's the answer. Experience playing with people regularly is invaluable. Before, when I practiced without people, I would practice with records, to at least try and think in a musical context. But experience is the greatest teacher.

**KM:** Would you transcribe solos?

**BS:** I did Philly Joe Jones on "Stablemates." That's a deceptive little solo. And I also transcribed a little bit of Max Roach. That helped me figure out some stickings that I wouldn't have understood otherwise. When I got to the East Coast I could hear people live, and that was very helpful to see how guys got their sound.

When I was in high school, I went to a jazz workshop at Stanford University; Victor Lewis was teaching there during the time he was playing with Stan Getz. That was one of the first name drummers I got to see live. I was amazed at how high he would lift his sticks sometimes. You're always taught to keep



the sticks close to the head. I found out later that you should do *whatever* it takes to get your sound. Live, you can see how the way drummers look affects their sound.

**KM:** Can creativity, as well as competence, be developed? You play very abstract things at times.

**BS:** I don't like to be bored, I really don't. I like surprises in music, and I really enjoy

**"When I play as a sideman, I prefer it if they tell me less rather than more as far as what they want. Then everybody plays from their experience rather than just trying to please the leader."**

playing with musicians who play things that can seem far in left field yet are musical—not just a stupid idea thrown in the wrong context. That requires creativity and taste, which is subjective.

I think certain people are more creative than others. Creativity can be developed and encouraged, but some people are just more creative.

**KM:** Were you inspired by





Joe Lovano, who was an early mentor?

**BS:** On the bandstand you can be very inspired by someone like him, absolutely. With someone like Joe, I don't seem to be at a loss for things to play. With Joe and a few others, I have the feeling I can play anything and it will work and not confuse them. Even with some very good name players, there are certain things I can't play because it will sound bad or confuse them, or they'll get lost. I can play pretty much anything with Scofield and it won't confuse him, [pianist] Kevin Hays too.

**KM:** What interests you most as a drummer?

**BS:** There's a feeling I get when I play music that is enjoyable. I like the interaction, and the feeling of different grooves.

**KM:** Did Scofield hear in you someone similar to himself, a musician who could play funk yet is well-versed in jazz?

**BS:** That's a factor. His music does have a lot of different influences. He has New Orleans grooves, though we never played any real backbeat stuff. He didn't want to do that. He wouldn't let me play backbeats. The music on *Hand Jive*, for instance, implied a backbeat. But it's not boom-slap, boom-slap. He's not interested in that now.

John's music can go in a lot of different directions, so I was open to doing that. But simultaneously, if it was a tune with a New Orleans groove, I wouldn't necessarily play some authentic groove. I'd always try to be open; even my swing playing might imply some funk. Even a single cut might have different influences.

The bands I worked with during that time with John were great bands, especially with Joe Lovano and Dennis Irwin. We played a lot of free things with no changes, and more conventional things as well. It was different every night, six nights in a row. It was never boring.

**KM:** So why'd you finally leave?

**BS:** I'd been with John for four and a half years. He works a lot. I wasn't doing too many other things then. After all of that time I started to feel that I wanted to do some other things, to be free to pursue some new directions and hopefully grow musically as a result. I'm still going to play with John. Steve Swallow [bassist] and I will be touring with him in Europe during April and May. John and I are on fine terms, and I certainly have an interest in playing with him in the future.

The time off has allowed me to do free-lance gigs, which has been nice. I've done some things musically I wouldn't have done with John. Some gigs are softer than John's, like [bassist] George Mraz or Kevin Hays.

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3. 22" K (crash/ride)  
4. 22" K (crash/ride)

**Sticks:** Zildjian Jazz model with a (prototype) wood tip, Regal Tip wire brushes

I'm playing different grooves and faster tempos. But I'm missing some things I did with John; it's a tradeoff.

**KM:** So it's not a case of the interaction growing stale?

**BS:** No, I think the music was on a high level when I left, although John does have a recognizable style and it is a challenge to keep coming up with new things to add to that.

**KM:** I don't know where you would've gone after *Hand Jive*. It sounded like R&B music at a barbecue.

**BS:** Many people see that as a high point and loved it more than the others. I have my favorites as well. I loved playing songs like "Big Sky," "Big Fan," "Meant To Be," and "Lost In Space." I like the freer structures. John is a great writer. He comes out with



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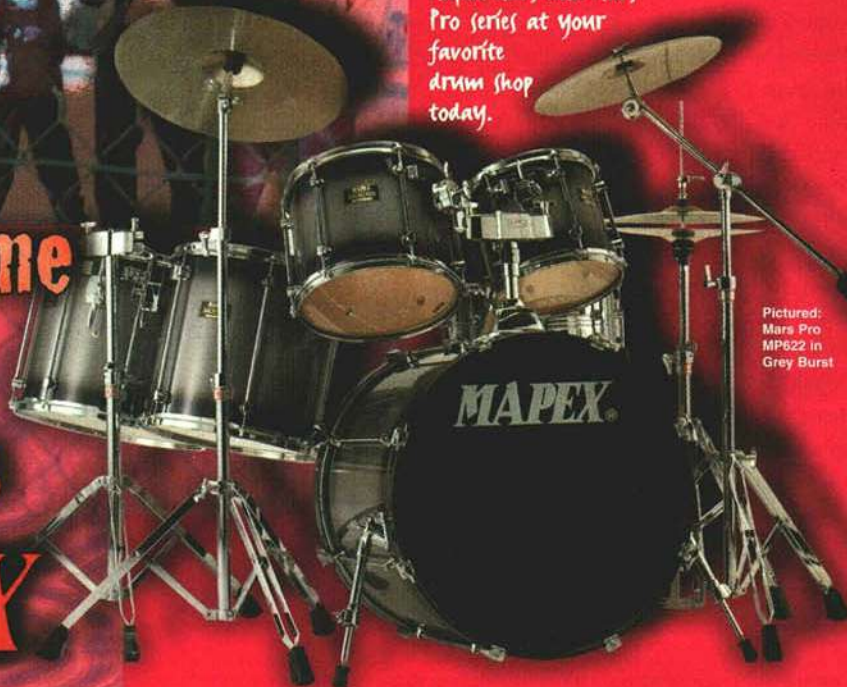
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## Remarkable Swing

Here are the albums Bill lists as the ones most representative of his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
Bill Stewart	Snide Remarks
Bill Stewart	Think Before You Think
John Scofield	What We Do
John Scofield	Meant To Be
John Scofield	Hand Jive
John Scofield	I Can See Your House From Here
Joe Lovano	Landmarks
Tim Hagans	No Words
Larry Goldings	Intimacy Of The Blues
Maceo Parker	Mo Roots
Marc Copeland	All Blues At Night
Larry Goldings	Whatever It Takes
Shamus Blake	The Call

...and here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Chick Corea	Trio Music	Roy Haynes
McCoy Tyner	The Real McCoy	Elvin Jones
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
Keith Jarrett	Standards Live	Jack DeJohnette
Dewey Redman & Ed Blackwell	Red And Black	Ed Blackwell
Ornette Coleman	In All Languages	Billy Higgins
Miles Davis	Neferiti	Tony Williams
Johnny Hammond Smith	Black Feeling	Bernard Purdie
Wayne Shorter	Et Cetera	Joe Chambers
Jo Jones	Jo Jones Trio	Jo Jones
James Brown	Motherlode	Clyde Stubblefield
Mustapha Tettey Addy	Les Percussions Du Ghana	various

piles of tunes, and it's always fun to find grooves for his music. Some of those are in-between types of grooves, which I really enjoyed.

**KM:** Many drummers coming off such a prominent gig would've waited for an equally prestigious opportunity before departing—maybe vie for the chair with Sonny Rollins, Pat Metheny, Hank Jones, or Tommy Flanagan.

**BS:** I've had some down time, but that's been good for me. I was on the road for a hundred and eighty days in '94. A break is good. Back on the New York scene I'll work with some players I haven't seen in a while. Then perhaps I'll do some bigger names if it's something I'm interested in. Just because it's a big-name gig with one of the guys you've mentioned doesn't mean I want to do it. It also depends if you're making a living. I need to work like anyone else.

I recently did a gig with Joe Henderson and George Mraz, and I had a great time. There are many artists on that level I'd like to play with, but if I mention them here it will sound like I'm trying to steal somebody's gig.

**KM:** Is playing with Dave Douglas and

Marty Ehrlich yet another musical idiom to get your ears around?

**BS:** It's a sextet with Dave. The music is a little more preconceived than the other things, although there are very free sections in the music besides the written-out parts.

**KM:** How have you changed as a drummer from the Scott Kreitzer record through Lovano and Scofield and up to this point?

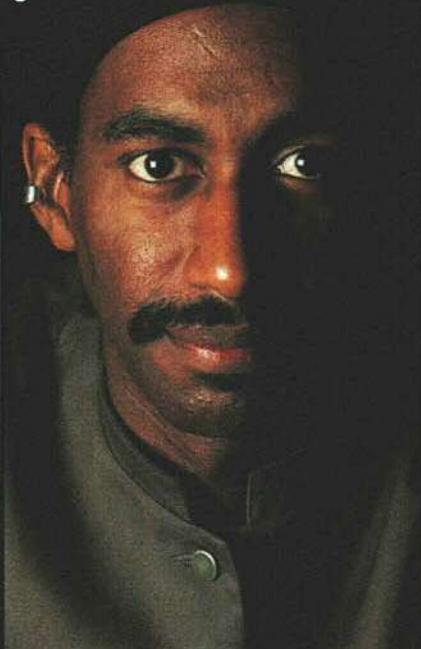
**BS:** As a sideman I'm able to sit down and play someone's music right off the bat better than I would have eight years ago. I've had the experience of playing so many people's music that if I'm playing their charts for the first time, I'm very comfortable. I can express myself on the first take. Before, I would've had more trouble. Generally I'm stronger, and my time playing is better. If I felt I wasn't getting any better, I'd be in a bad mood. [laughs]

**KM:** On Larry Goldings' record your funk is understated. You're not pummeling the drums. It's more attitude than volume. Is it a misconception that funk drumming is always loud?

**BS:** That's not how I go about it. If you listen to the James Brown records, you can hear how light that funk is. "Funky Drummer" sounds feather-light. I can't

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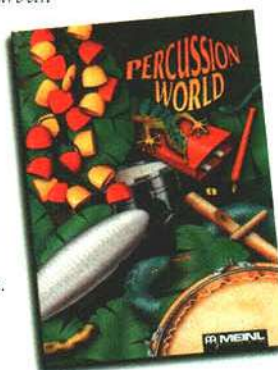
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play it that light and make it sound good. I can't play it as lightly as Clyde Stubblefield. Lightness gives it some subtlety and it breathes more. Even on a recording you can tell. But there are times when you should hit hard.

**KM:** On the old Prestige organ-trio records everyone has that laid-back, hip attitude.

**BS:** Drums sound different when they're hit hard than when they're hit soft. It's not just louder and softer—it makes for a different quality.

**KM:** You get a rich, full drum sound that doesn't change from record to record.

**BS:** I certainly try for that. I don't really change my setup much. With Larry Goldings, I play funk with more of a jazz attitude anyway.

**KM:** The groove on "Boogie On Reggae Woman" is so bright and popping—it's very nasty and sharp.

**BS:** That was hard to do, actually. If you

listen, I don't play any drum fills or cymbal crashes in the whole song. They could've looped me but they didn't. When you're doing something like that and the track is five minutes long, you hope you're not going to flub. It's a challenge to play the same thing over and over and keep it happening.

**KM:** Is there an art to organ-trio jazz drumming?

**BS:** I don't think of it any differently from the other things I do. I don't approach the gig with a different attitude. Sometimes with the organ I feel the need to be more solid since there's no bass to really take care of business time-wise. The drums and organ combination have a wide dynamic range that can be exploited, which I do. With a piano trio I would never completely "bash out."

**KM:** Were the Scofield records as good as the live performances from an angle of

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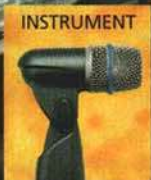


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improvisation and immediacy?

**BS:** Most of the gigs were pretty good. The records represented the way we played, except live the songs were more stretched out. That was never captured on record, which is unfortunate. But record companies want six-minute cuts that the radio will play.

There is a bootleg record of the Scofield band with Lovano, Mark Johnson, and me that came out in Europe. It has the twenty-minute versions. As much as I don't like the fact that nobody is getting paid from the bootleg, that CD does show a side that was never documented. In a way, it's stronger than the studio recordings.

**KM:** So you're never constricted by the studio?

**BS:** Sometimes I feel inspired by it. I always take playing seriously, but especially when I know it's going down on tape. It makes me concentrate more. When I made my first recordings I felt nervous, but not any more. The studio is no different from playing live. I don't think in different dynamics, or use different drumheads or cymbals.

**KM:** Do you use the same cymbals from gig to gig?

**BS:** Same hi-hats and left-side cymbal. With Sco I used one set of cymbals. I've been using the same cymbals the last three weeks on separate gigs. Sometimes I'll use a certain cymbal to make me play unusually.

**KM:** You're using an icebell variation on *Snide Remarks*.

**BS:** It's a little handmade cymbal, six inches across, made by a guy in Copenhagen named Hubbeck. I broke it anyway. Then [bassist] Dennis Irwin loaned me his and I broke it too.

**KM:** You're very adept and quick at hi-hat phrasing. You can drop triplet combinations of snare drum, hi-hat—with your hand or foot—and cymbal seemingly anywhere. How'd you build that technique?

**BS:** I just practiced those types of rhythms—putting the hi-hat on different parts of the triplet, trying to be musical and play some ideas on the hi-hat. I didn't have any real exercises I worked on; I tried to play musical ideas on the set.

When I do practice, being musical is my number-one priority. I try to practice musically. I don't practice exercises or warm-up routines or rudiments or any of that stuff. If

I have time off, I practice certain tempos that I want to improve on. Sometimes I just improvise at the drumset—just playing for a while. It's valuable. I might practice brushes for an hour. So I'm not into the typical drummer's techniques: There are many drummers who can play rudiments better than I can.

**KM:** You never practiced the rudiments?

**BS:** Yes, I can remember having a page that had them on there. Twenty-six, is that how many there are?

**KM:** Bill, c'mon.

**BS:** I think that's right. Yeah, I remember running through them once or twice. I kind of know what they are. [drums his hands on the table] I know what a ratamacue is.

I know some guys who sit in front of the television for hours and play on a pad doing these exercises for their hands. I can't begin to understand that. I don't know why anybody would think that would improve their musicianship.

**KM:** So you never practiced *Stick Control* or concentrated on snare drum technique?

**BS:** I did play some etudes out of books. That can be helpful because it's musical and they have dynamics, and it's hard to execute the figures at the marked tempos.

**KM:** If we went to Drummers Collective [school/practice facility in New York] right now, the place would be covered in practicing drummers.

**BS:** I know, we used to rehearse there. I'd see five drummers in the lounge pounding away at their pad while watching some video of whoever the latest rock drummer is.

**KM:** You see that as futile.

**BS:** Maybe that type of practice is helping them. And I know name drummers who like to warm up before gigs. I don't do that 'cause it puts me in a frame of mind of concentrating on a technical exercise before I play the music. I don't understand how playing on a pad five minutes before a gig can improve my technique or make me play better.

**KM:** Isn't the idea to loosen up the muscles?

**BS:** I don't know. I'm not stiff when I start to play. If I haven't played for two days and I sit down to play, that's fine. I like the freshness of not playing on the day of the gig. I really like having that clear-mind thing. If I'm out on tour I prefer not having a sound check: Then when the first notes of

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the day are played they're the first notes of the gig. It has such a freshness when you first hear the music.

**KM:** Dennis Chambers said that when he was with Scofield he would start the set with the fastest song of the night, like "The Nag."

**BS:** When I played with him the style of music was different from what he was doing with Dennis. We would be aggressive—that's okay. But I do like that freshness you get. I'd rather talk to somebody before a gig than play on a pad. I don't own a pad. My hands aren't that fast anyway. They're okay, they're decent.

**KM:** There are certain things I associate with your drumming: ruffs on the snare and around the set; very rich tom-tom notes, and a polyrhythmic cross of rimclicks, hi-hat, and rumbling toms. I've heard the polyrhythm combinations live and on your record, as on "Crosstalk." And you have a clear, defined swing feel. The ruffs sound like Roy Haynes, but I can't place the other elements so easily.

**BS:** The ruffs may come from Roy Haynes; he does stuff like that. But the sound I get isn't exactly like Roy's. I can't

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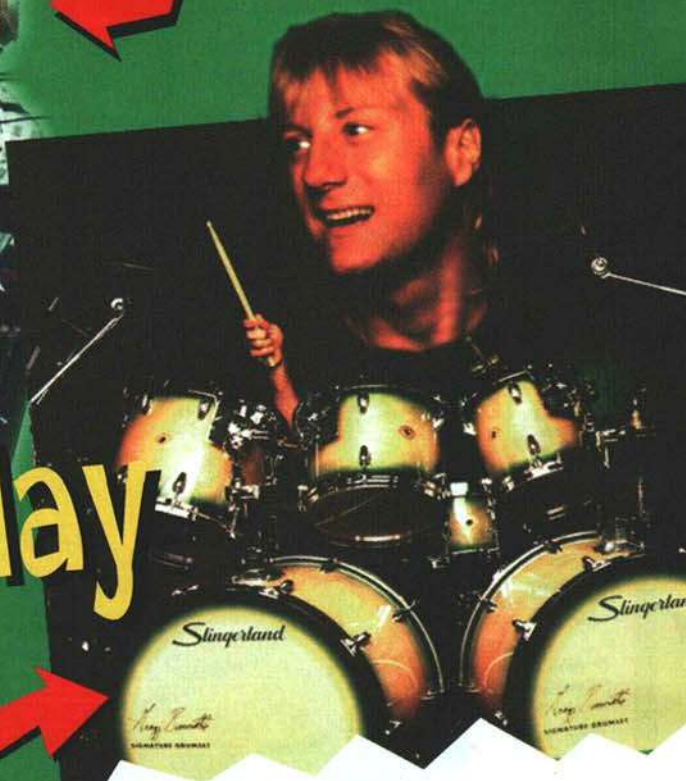


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do it like Roy. I've worked on and developed the polyrhythms and I can do a few variations on them. I've practiced those—I didn't just play them one day. I try to play them in a different way, though.

I'm aware that there are things I do that are unique to me and some things I've gotten from other drummers that are not unique at *all*. Those that are unique I try to develop; maybe that's how a style is formed. You find your own slant. As long as I don't play those things the same way every time it's a good thing.

**KM:** Your style initially reminded me of early '60s Tony Williams meets Peter Erskine. You had the fire of Tony and the clean execution of Erskine.

**BS:** I know who my favorites are. I love Roy Haynes—the looseness he plays with, especially in recent years. I love Elvin Jones and Jack DeJohnette, and Philly Joe Jones and early Tony Williams when he was playing the smaller bass drum and darker cymbals. I always liked his sound.

Sound is an important aspect of style, too. You recognize someone's snare drum sound or cymbal sound. I always liked Tony's cymbals with Miles and Roy

**Bill Stewart**

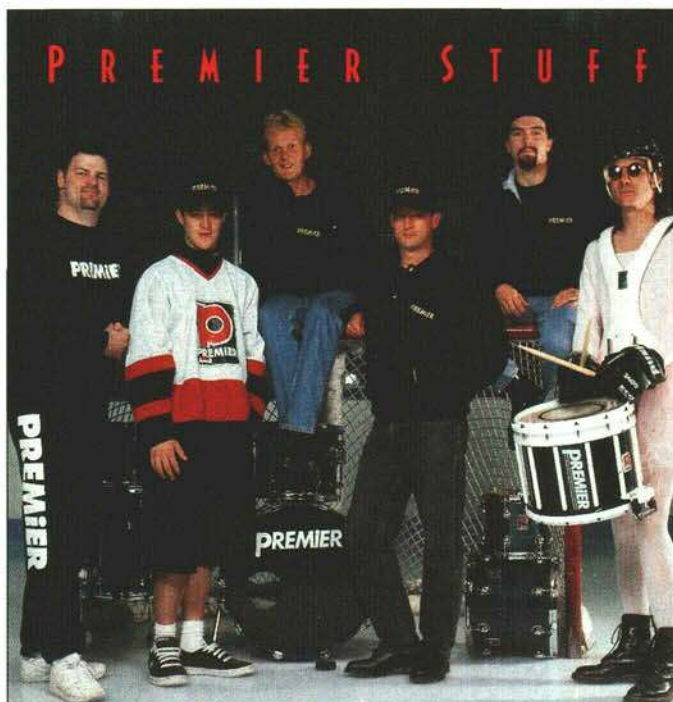
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**KM:** I've read that you like African drumming. Perhaps that's influenced your polyrhythms.

**BS:** I have a few African records I enjoy. Ed Blackwell did a lot with that as far as bringing a jazz sensibility to it. As far as the polyrhythms, I hear a lot of things in 6/8 with dotted-quarter notes. Sometimes I put that against 4/4. I'll keep a constant and improvise over that. I like to layer one rhythm over another. Or I'll play off-beats on the hi-hats and expand from that.

**KM:** *Snide Remarks* sounds inspired by Wayne Shorter, late '60s Miles, and also twentieth-century classical.

**BS:** Your review of my album said my music is based on Debussy, Messiaen, and Bartok. That's not true, actually. One tune is based on a scale Messiaen uses, but I've never mentioned Debussy. It gives people the wrong idea.

**KM:** But there is that influence.

**BS:** There is but it's not a real studied influence. I don't consider myself an expert of twentieth-century classical music. I'm

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just not. I enjoy hearing some of that music. It creeps its way into my music.

**KM:** Most people would've expected you to rehash music you'd played before, but *Snide Remarks* is a departure from what you've done with former bandleaders. It's not yet another trad or bop record.

**BS:** I didn't want it to be a drum album, I just wanted it to be musical. I also wanted to express my ideas as a writer, which are not always related to my drumming. I'm usually trying to express ideas that I can't express through my drumming. Sometimes I wish I would write things that are great vehicles for my drumming, but that's not how I go about it. It's a different outlet.

**KM:** Are you happy with the album?

**BS:** I was very happy with how the guys played. They made my music sound better than I expected. I tried to have each piece be a little different. I wanted to give the bandmembers some freedom in what they played.

For me, when I play as a sideman, I prefer it if they tell me less rather than more as far as what they want. Then everybody plays from their experience rather than just trying to please the leader. I attempted to



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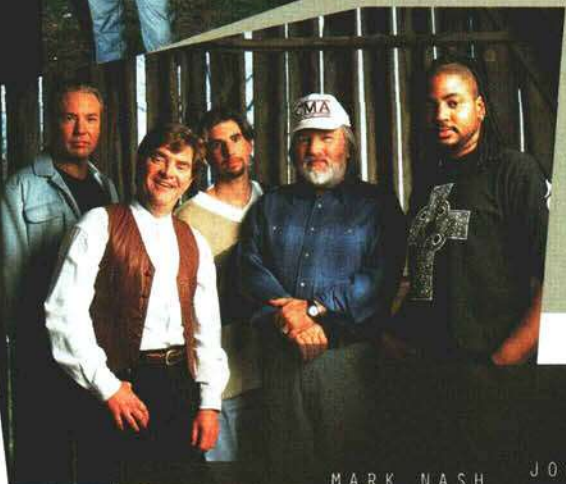
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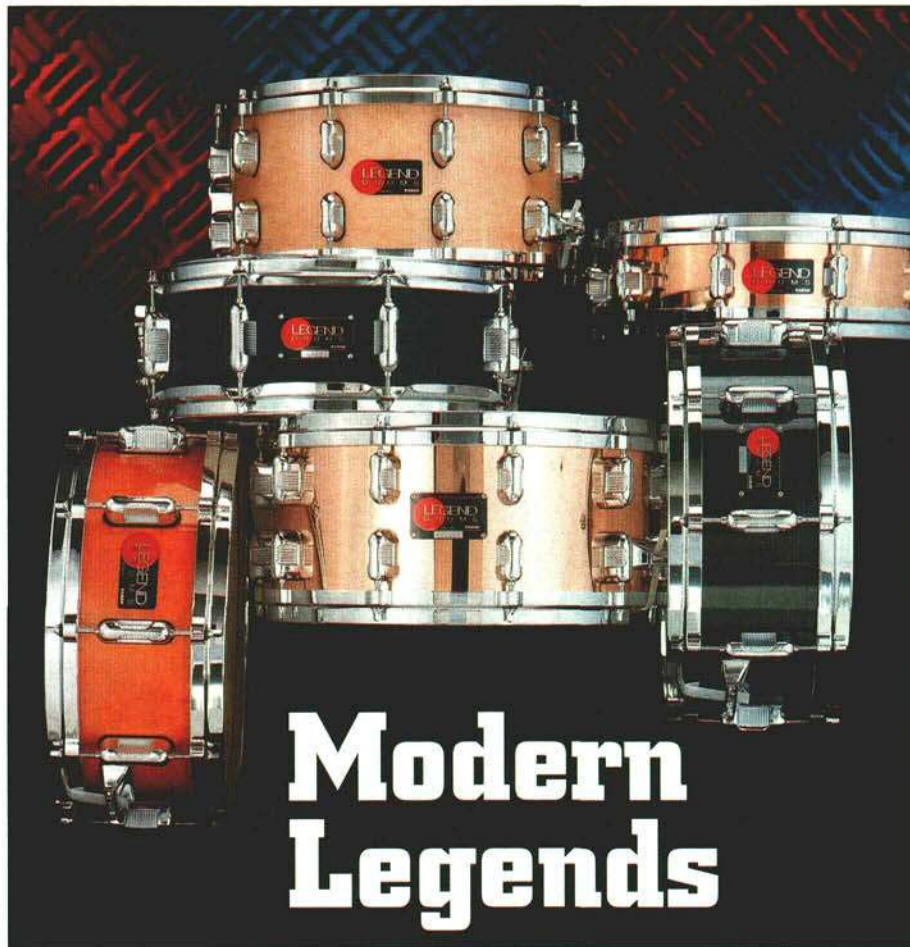


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do diverse things format-wise within the music, like having Joe Lovano and Eddie Henderson trade choruses instead of playing complete solos. Or having everyone improvise together in some spots. There are places in "Mayberry" where the piano, bass, and drums are improvising simultaneously. No one is accompanying, it's an equal situation at times. There are some traditional solos and heads but also songs that are more collective. Three of the nine tunes have an open format for improvisation.

**KM:** What's your take on making jazz a classical form of music, with a canon to learn and a definite, prescribed path to follow? Jazz is not as rebellious as it once was.

**BS:** Some people weren't satisfied with the rebellious music. They didn't think it was as good as the music from the past. I personally don't like to feel that I have to play exclusively in an older style or have to edit my playing in that way. I think everyone should play from their whole experience, play what they feel within the music as it's happening.

Some of the people who do play older styles do it very well, and I can enjoy that sometimes. But I don't think about playing in a particular era. And I also don't think about having to be modern or super-advanced. But I don't like music that's predictable. It seems like when people play in styles of the past you can hear what's going to happen before it happens, and it's usually not as good as the records they're trying to imitate. I like to be surprised with music.

You can tell Scofield and Lovano have listened to many different eras, not just one. If a drummer imitates one drummer as a model for his style, that person is doomed to failure. How can you sound more like that drummer than he does? How can you outdo the original? It's best to try to appreciate a broad range of music, picking up ideas here and there. That will inspire you, and it will undoubtedly come out sounding like you.



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# Female Drummers Round Table

By Robyn Flans

There was excitement in the air as seven drummers convened in one room for a *Modern Drummer* round table interview. It isn't often that fellow musicians have an excuse to spend a chunk of time together.

Dawn Richardson, formerly of 4 Non Blondes, interrupted her work with her own record label, Slot Records, and her current project, Trinket, to drive down to L.A. from Northern California. The notable Sheila E, who

has worked with such luminaries as George Duke, Herbie Hancock, Lionel Richie, Spyro Gyra, Jeffrey Osborne, and Prince, and who's also enjoyed a successful solo career, came with Terri Lyne Carrington (Al Jarreau, Stan Getz, David Sanborn, Wayne Shorter, and most recently Herbie Hancock), as the two had just arrived home from a joint clinic tour. Kate Schellenbach of Luscious Jackson flew

in from New York for the occasion. Patty Schemel flew in from New York the day of the interview, after Hole had performed at the prior evening's MTV Awards. Sandra Bernhard's drummer, Denise Fraser, and Hilary Jones (freelancer who has worked in a variety of situations including Scott Henderson's Tribal Tech, Marc Russo, and Ray Obiedo) were also able to join the confab.

What these drummers have in common is that they're women—which, while not quite unheard of, isn't exactly commonplace, either. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss drumming from a feminine point of view, which will hopefully both inspire other female drummers as well as enlighten *male* musicians.





Standing, left to right: Denise Fraser, Dawn Richardson, Kate Schellenbach, Sheila E, and Hilary Jones.  
Seated, left to right: Patty Schemel, Terri Lyne Carrington.

**RF:** What do you think is the difference between men and women drummers?

**Hilary:** Men have a penis. We don't. That's about it.

**Denise:** A lot of people have it in their minds that women are not as strong as men. As we all know, it takes an enormous amount of endurance to play drums. I sometimes think that the general public feels that drumming is a male-oriented activity and that women

shouldn't play because of the physical nature of the instrument.

**Dawn:** Drumming is about playing with your wrists and not so much with your arms.

**Terri Lyne:** I definitely think there's a difference between men and women, physically. I'm not sure it affects playing the drums, though. But then again, when

I go to the gym it's obvious that men have a different kind of muscle tone. As much as I would like to, I will probably never be able to bench-press what a man who weighs two hundred pounds can.

**RF:** Men are stronger.

**Hilary:** But drumming's not

Photos by Jack White

just a strength thing.

**Denise:** Men are obviously built differently, but it doesn't affect me as a player.

**Dawn:** I think that's the basic misconception about drums—that it takes some



enormous upper body strength.

**Terri Lyne:** There are some men who use their arms and get some strength from it. There are some really high-powered, high-energy fusion or rock groups that I have watched and thought, "Wow, I need to go to the gym for a couple of years before I can do that gig." But then I realized there are a lot of *men* who couldn't do that gig either!

**Kate:** A lot of girls say to me after shows, "Wow, you play so hard." I think women aren't socialized to make noise, while men can just go out there and do it. I think women have a lot more to get over before they can actually sit down and make a lot of noise.

**Hilary:** I always think back to when it really was a more male-dominated profession. I talk to people at gigs, chicks who say, "I always wanted to learn how to play drums, but my parents said I had to play the flute." I always think of how many more people were attracted to the instrument who had to squelch the idea of playing.



Carrington, E., and Jones

**RF:** Why do you all feel you had the courage?

**Hilary:** When I was growing up I wasn't aware that it was something that should take a lot of courage. I just wanted to do it, so I did. My parents never said I shouldn't.

**RF:** But if the rest of the world is sending out the message that it's not okay....

**Hilary:** I guess I wasn't

**"There are some really high-powered, high-energy fusion groups that I have watched and thought, 'Wow, I need to go to the gym before I can do that gig.' But then I realized there are a lot of men who couldn't do that gig either!"**

—Terri Lyne Carrington

exposed to enough of the rest of the world, which maybe was a good thing.

**Patty:** My parents were really supportive of my playing drums. It was sort of a novelty, though—the girl drummer. I think now it's to the point where it's not a novelty anymore.

**Denise:** I remember I was very young when I started playing, and I didn't even know I had picked a male-dominated instrument. I was attracted to it, it was natural to me, although I played guitar and piano prior to drums. I never thought I would be facing any discrimination or sexism.

**RF:** Sheila, you grew up in a male-dominated family. Was

everyone cool about your choice of instrument?

**Sheila:** It was a normal thing for me as well. My dad started playing when he was fifteen, so since it was around the house, I had no choice but to pick it up. I think when I was in the third grade he wanted me to take violin because he didn't want me to have to have to struggle as a percussionist. He had been struggling all his life and didn't want me to have to go through that. I took violin for five years and got scholarships to go to school and I turned them all down. Why? Because I played one show with him when I was fifteen and I was hooked. It was a feeling I had never, ever felt



Schellenhach, Richardson



'I walked into a music store recently with a friend of mine, and this guy was behind the counter. I was looking at some stuff and the guy said something like, 'Practice a triple paradiddle with flams—that'll really work your chops.' I guess he felt like he had to school me on everything. I was like, 'Who asked you?'"

—Hilary Jones



Jones, Schemel

before in my life.

It was a concert in San Francisco and there were about 3,000 people there—and to be on stage with my dad! He kept telling me the whole time he didn't want me to do it. "You're fifteen years old," he said. I said, "I know the songs, can't I just play the songs?" So I sat in and played congas, but then he told me to take a solo. I didn't really know what a solo was, but he said, "Express what you feel," and I did and got a standing ovation. I looked at my dad, and we were both just crying. It was amazing. That night I

decided that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

**Hilary:** I think it's neat that you grew up around drums, because my dad was a musician, but he retired when I was three. You got to absorb it.

**Sheila:** And that's what happened. I absorbed it. He never sat down and showed

"I always felt I had something to prove, so I just went for it all the time and banged away. As a women, I wanted to show everyone that I was as good and as strong as a guy,"

—Patty Schemel

us anything. We'd sit there and watch them play, and when his band would take a break, I'd bang on the drums,

have some soda, and then go outside and play. I never took it seriously, but I think he saw at an early age that I wanted to.

**Terri Lyne:** Your family is an interesting case for genetics, Sheila, since your whole family plays. My grandfather played drums and my father played a little bit, but my grandfather passed away right before I was born. Personally, I

feel life is eternal. I started playing at seven, I had never seen him play, and there were no pictures. But everybody in my family said I looked just like him behind the drumset. Sometimes I think genetics can have something to do with it.

**RF:** What about being a woman and dealing with equipment? If you sat down at Alex Van Halen's drumset, for example, do you think there would be something you would have to alter?

**Terri Lyne:** If I sat down at Sheila's set, I'd have to alter it. I think you'd have to with everybody.

**Denise:** I'd probably need to lower his cymbals a bit.

**Hilary:** Drummers who can get on any kit and not have



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to rearrange anything amaze me. Sheila is that way.

**Sheila:** No I'm not.

**Hilary:** You've sat down at my kit and you don't have to rearrange anything. She'll sit down, sometimes even in high heels. I'm so particular about that. If it's not comfortable, I feel pain.

**Terri Lyne:** I've sat in on Buddy Rich's, Elvin Jones', Roy Haynes', Max Roach's, Art Blakey's, and Louie Bellson's sets. As a kid, I felt uncomfortable about moving their stuff, unless somebody was left-handed. So sitting on someone's kit makes you adaptable, and what I realized later is that when I sit down on somebody else's set, it makes me play differently. I'm always funky when I play Sheila's set!

**Sheila:** I think Terri Lyne's setup is more jazz-oriented than mine. My drum sound is a lot tighter. It also depends on the gig. If she were doing a more funky thing, she would change it a little. The sounds of the drums make a difference, the way you tune them makes a difference.

**Terri Lyne:** When I sit down at your drums, I'm going to play funky because that's the way the drums sound. But if I sit down at Jack DeJohnette's drums, there's no way funk is going to come out. The sound dictates your response. If I sit down to a funk set and try to play jazz, nobody would ever believe that I played jazz professionally. It doesn't come off.

**RF:** As far as equipment goes, if you could have all the manufacturers hear you, is there anything they could do to better accommodate women drummers?

**Kate:** One of the things that manufacturers have done that I have *disliked* is advertising the "babe" at the drums—the sleazy-looking model type who obviously isn't a drummer. It's getting better, but that is offensive to me.

Equipment-wise, my only request to manufacturers is to make seats, snare stands, and hi-hat stands that go lower. I like things low. I'm not short—obviously, there are a lot of guy drummers who are shorter than me—but I like to play things low. But that's not just a woman thing. Dave Grohl's seat is very low, but his hi-hat is up high.

**Patty:** His rack toms are also flat. A lot of drummers play their toms flat, like a table you can eat on. It's so awkward for me. I have them angled slightly, so when I fill

I'm not going to hit rims.

**Kate:** I've played on women's kits where the cymbals are way up high. I sat in for one song once and I asked the drummer why she had her cymbals up so high, and she said, "Because my girlfriend said she couldn't see my face from the audience."

It took me years to find the right place for everything, and I'm still adjusting. I'm very sensitive to where things are positioned. If the seat is a half-inch off, it bothers me.

**Denise:** I'm extremely meticulous. It's got to be the exact height. I do agree, sometimes I'll sit in at a club and the hi-hat will not go down, and it's hard.

**Hilary:** It might mean that overall, men are generally taller, that their arms and legs are longer, and perhaps companies manufacture to the average height. But if you go to a woman's gym, some companies actually design equipment that is smaller. A machine might not be as wide, or you won't start with a forty-pound weight, you'll start with a ten-pound weight because there are obvious differences.

Drumming is physical, but it's more about stamina and finesse than anything.

**Terri Lyne:** There might be an inherent quality that women have if you want to talk about the difference between women and men. I've played with Wayne Shorter off and on for the last ten years, and he always makes observations on inherent differences between men and women.

**RF:** Men might get angry with me for this, but I would say one feminine attribute would be sensitivity.

**Hilary:** I don't know about that. I have a twin sister whose apartment is so cute. If you go into my apartment, you'd think it was a guy's apartment. I can't seem to get that woman's touch. I think we're all individuals and we all have different personalities and characteristics.

**Terri Lyne:** Tell me if you disagree with this, though, Hilary: What you're saying is correct; everybody is different. But you can generalize to some degree. You can generalize that, say, people from Southern California may be a little different than people from New York. So you *can* generalize without offending anyone.

I used to have a problem admitting that there was a difference between women and men, but there is. It might even have to do with the sensitivity of how someone talks



to somebody else. I have been in situations where I have wanted to tell the bandleader, "What if you did this..."? I think about how I should do it so as not to offend him. And a lot of times I get results. If a guy approaches a bandleader, one of two things may happen: He may make his point in a harsh or crude way, where the leader will get offended and say no, or he will accept it because it's coming from one of his boys. If I said it harsh or crude, it definitely would not be accepted.

**Hilary:** You're talking about a deeper, more societal kind of thing. I agree with that.

**Denise:** It's not what you say, but how you say it.

**Terri Lyne:** That's with everybody, but I think women have a little bit more of that together because we've had to, in order to get where we wanted to go and because we are nurturers and it's how our mothers dealt with us.

**RF:** What about playing-wise? Do you think women are more sensitive players?

**Terri Lyne:** Yes.

**Denise:** The thing I've gotten a lot that

baffles me is that people will say, "You don't play like a girl." I'll ask, "What does *that* mean?" They have it in their mind that women play really soft—that we don't push it or lay it down or lay into it.

**RF:** Back to the socialization thing—are we as women not groomed to be aggressive?

**Kate:** I have something to say on that. I play in an all-girl band. It wasn't a conscious decision. It just worked out that we all got together and got along well as players. I've played in bands where I was the only girl, too. If I wanted to make a broad generalization, I would say that female musicians listen more. Instead of just playing a part, they'll listen to some thoughts on the subject—"Do you like this?" I think it's definitely socialization. Women don't generally have the confidence to assert in a big way. I think they still have a lot of issues.

**RF:** Patty, you work in a very aggressive musical situation. Growing up, were you encouraged to be that way? Was that okay?

**Patty:** I play with women and men, and I feel that women are more intuitive. Like

Kate was saying, there's a lot more listening and a lot more working things out rather than just bashing away at something. I always felt I had something to prove, though, so I just went for it all the time and banged away.

**Terri Lyne:** Did that feeling that you had something to prove change?

**Patty:** Yeah, after I proved it.

**Terri Lyne:** Do you feel better about your playing?

**Patty:** Yes. I always felt confident. I felt feisty when I was young.

**RF:** Does feeling like you have something to prove come from discrimination?

**Patty:** Yes, because as a woman, I wanted to show everyone that I was as good and as strong as a guy.

**RF:** Terri Lyne, you seem surprised by this. Didn't you ever feel that?

**Terri Lyne:** That I had something to prove?

**RF:** That because of the discrimination you had to be that much better.

**Terri Lyne:** Yeah, but I think that's different from feeling you have something to prove. This guy said to me once when I

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was a kid, "Your only competition is yourself." I always kept that in mind. The same guy said, "No matter how great or good a person is, they can only do one gig at a time," so there's no monopoly on gigs. The other thing is I didn't realize what discrimination was until I was a little older and had already been playing for ten years.

**RF:** What happened?

**Terri Lyne:** Nothing specific, but things happened, like guys would say to me that there was a guy who may not play as good as me, but that they were going to hire him because he's got a family to feed and I don't need to work. By that time, though, I had already developed my playing, so it wasn't really a time to change jobs.

I agree with Patty, though, about women listening better, because I realize lots of times I'll get a gig and I've wondered why someone will call me after I see the incredible drummers they've gone through, people who are ridiculously awesome. But I'll hear the comment from the leader, "I'll tell them I want to hear this and they'll think that's corny or they have something hipper to play—better, faster or with more technique." I think that, in general, women will try to please whomever they are working for.

**Kate:** That goes back to the general psychology of women. We're always trying to please whoever it is—our parents, lovers, children, employers. It's socialization.

**Terri Lyne:** Which is an advantage.

**Dawn:** This type of thing is true in the rock

thing, too. I've been in a bunch of different groups with males where I noticed that the guys didn't even know what the lead singer was singing about. I was there thinking, "Doesn't this matter to you?"

**RF:** I think women generally tune in to lyrics more anyway, if it's a lyrical situation.

**Terri Lyne:** Actually, I always zero in on the music first.

**Sheila:** Me too.

**Kate:** I still don't know the words to some of the songs my band does.

**Hilary:** It's easier for me to learn music if they're singing, because I identify with it. On some of the gigs I did subbing for Tris [Imboden] in the Wild Clams, Cecilia sings in Spanish. I don't speak Spanish, and I was having a harder time learning the songs. I realized it was because I couldn't sing along.

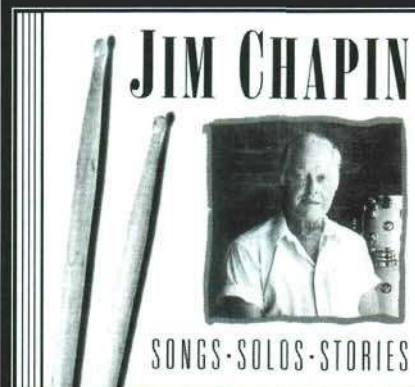
**Denise:** I use lyrics sometimes as a road map because I don't want to step on the vocals or because I want to play something that's very sensitive to bring the band into the next chorus. I tune into lyrics a lot. Fortunately, I haven't had to learn Spanish.

**RF:** I wonder if we could share some of the experiences you've had that were tough because you were women, but that you've barreled through.

**Kate:** When we were talking about growing up, Patty, and you said your parents were supportive, I thought about my parents being very supportive also. I was in this insular world and I was teaching

myself how to play. It was really cool, except when I had to go up to the music store on 48th Street and buy drumsticks. I was horrified. I wouldn't do it for years. After gigs, I would go backstage and find sticks, anything to keep from going to a music store, because I was intimidated by

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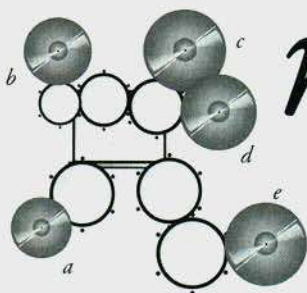


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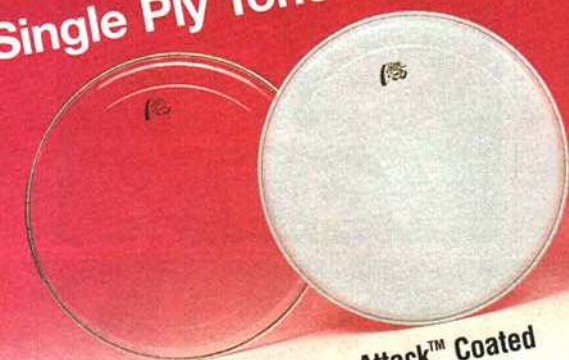
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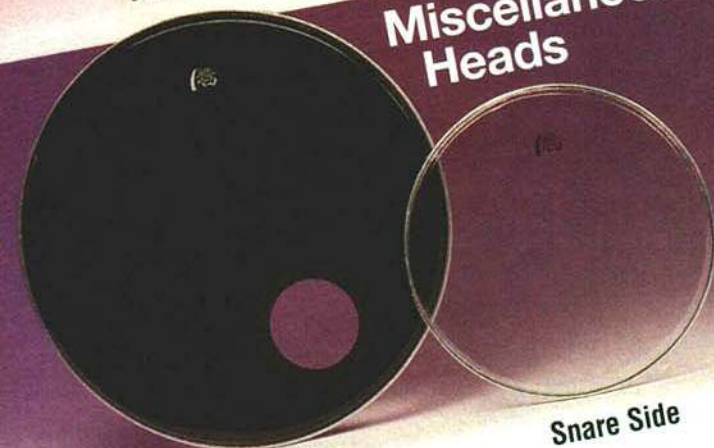


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the salespeople. Here's this little fifteen-year-old girl, and there were these long-haired rock dudes who were going, "Hey little girl, what are you doing?"

**Dawn:** I totally agree with that. I still don't like going into Guitar Center. And I will not sit down at a drumset and play.

**Hilary:** I walked into a music store recently with a friend of mine, and this guy was behind the counter. I was looking at some stuff and the guy said something like, "Practice a triple paradiddle with flams—that'll really work your chops." He was feeling like he had to school me on everything. It's like, "Who asked you?" I walk a fine line because I don't want to be too militant about it, but even though you know that people mean well, when you've had it up to here, it gets old.

**Terri Lyne:** I still am intimidated. If I'm in a controlled environment where I know this is "me," I'm fine. But if I'm in a situation where other drummers are watching closely, there's a feeling that happens and I'm not sure it happens to as many guys. I don't know if being a woman has anything to do with it, but I've seen people doing the exact gigs I've done and I don't see them getting as nervous as I get.

**Kate:** They're just fearless. I think from someplace within us, we're waiting for somebody to put us down.

**Dawn:** Because we're women. That's where it comes from. I know when I've gone out on a lot of auditions, I have been told that I was the best drummer, but I

didn't get it because they had to go with a guy. And when I go in, I have the feeling that I can't just be good; I have to be *better* than the next guy. I'm constantly waiting to be put down because they have a problem with it not being a guy behind the drums.

**Denise:** I started playing when I was ten years old, and I've been in a lot of bands. And for the most part I've been the only girl in the band. In a lot of ways it's like a boys' club—the boys' locker room. The guys like to hang with the guys. I can hang really well with guys, but there's still that male bonding thing.

**Hilary:** I feel like I walk a thin line. It's hard because I don't think they know where to draw a line either. I empathize with them, but I've been in some situations—and I won't mention any names—where it's been really strange. I can hang with guys. I have all my life. I always played kickball and football with the boys outside, and I get along with men well. But in a working situation, I've found that it's cool to be one of the guys and have some really good times, but if you cross that line too much—and sometimes it's hard to define where it is—you end up feeling offended. Sometimes they go too far or somehow they've lost their respect for you as a woman.

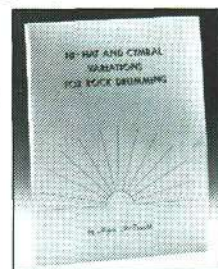
**RF:** What happens? Do you have to pull back? Do you have to let them know you're a little offended?

**Hilary:** At times, yes. I let people know

when I'm offended as a general rule. I read in the paper the stories of sexual harassment and I just laugh. If somebody called me honey or squeezed my arm, I'd think they were nice. The kind of sexual harassment I'm talking about is something different. It's rude, crude stuff. I think on one

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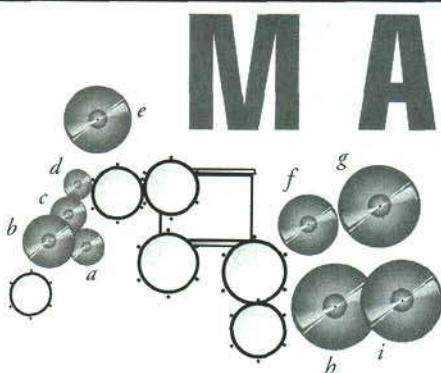
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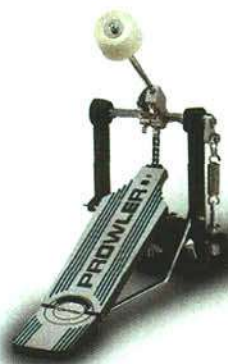
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hand they test to see how far they can push you, I don't know. It's very insidious because it's not something with a clear, defined line.

**Sheila:** She has a point. I always try to surround myself with people who respect me as much as I respect them, so I try to make sure if I get into a band it's something I want to do. I make sure all the people around me feel the same way. I don't want to be in a band with guys who talk to me like that.

**Hilary:** You don't know until you're in there. Sheila, you're a bandleader. That's the ultimate. As far as dealing with that kind of stuff, you have a certain control over that if it's your band. But if you're out there, sweating it out just to make a living, you've got to get the gigs and work to pay the bills.

**Terri Lyne:** I think there's an art to demanding the respect you deserve.

**Hilary:** I think it's easier to do that when you meet someone once or twice. When you live with somebody on the road, it's the real deal, and at some point you've got to be yourself. It's like going out on a first date—you keep a little distance, but the longer you're around someone, the closer you become.

**Terri Lyne:** I just go to my room, or if I'm on the bus, I have a bunk I can go to.

**RF:** Have any of you lost a gig because they needed guys to share rooms?

**Sheila:** No, but the only gig I ever lost was with Diana Ross. We were playing at the

Circle Star Theatre in San Francisco. The conductor was the one who called me to play. The attire was all black, and I showed up with a top that was a little small. I thought it was pleasant, but everyone else in the orchestra was pretty much covered. I can't play like that. I like to keep my arms as free as possible. I've had times when my sleeves have gotten caught on things and I've yanked my earrings and slit my ears.

Anyway, I have a lot of family in the Bay Area who came to a gig we did there. Ross really got mad at me because I was getting a lot of attention. After the first set, the conductor came up to me and said, "Ms. Ross wants you to change your clothes." I said, "You hired me and you said the attire was black, so this is what I'm wearing." He said, "She needs you to cover up; you're too revealing." I said, "You hired me because I'm a good musician, not for what I look like or for what I'm wearing. You said the dress code was black, and I think this is fine." He said, "I'm sorry, but you're going to have to change it." I said, "I don't think so." I just left. I said, "Get somebody else," and I didn't play the second set.

Three years later, I became "Sheila E" and had an album out, and I bumped into her at the *American Music Awards*. I walked into the room and she was like, "Oh, there's my baby, come here...."

**RF:** Did that happen early in your career?

**Sheila:** That was about 1980.

**RF:** That was a lot for you to stand up to at

that age. You had a lot of self-respect.

**Sheila:** Well, my mom...it's her fault. She doesn't take anything. We have a really strong family, and we all support each other. She's always just said, "Go out and do it; there's nothing you can't do."

**Hilary:** When you have parents like that, it

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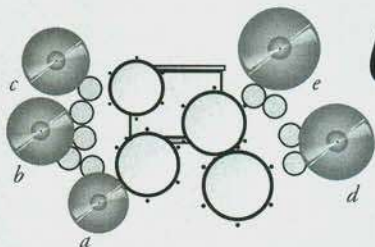
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makes all the difference in the world. That's what my parents told me, and thank God I had the parents I had. You've got to support your kids.

**RF:** When I mentioned technique before, you laughed, Sheila, and reacted like you and Terri Lyne have two different viewpoints.

**Sheila:** When we did some clinics together, we sat down and had to figure out how we were going to put this thing together, what we were going to talk about, when, and where. We were talking about technique. She wanted to show all her paradiddles and warm-up exercises. She wanted to pass out the sheets. She reads music and we had a projector so everyone could see it. I don't know any of that stuff. I admire her so much. She reads and she started so young, and she's so accomplished. I didn't get all of the formal training that she had. It just wasn't in the cards for me.

**Terri Lyne:** Yeah, look at her career and look at mine. [everyone laughs]

**Sheila:** There are a lot of things technically that I can't do, but only because I've never been taught. I've taught myself. No one

ever sat down to teach me anything, and I've never practiced a day in my life. I was fourteen and someone said, "Can you play drums in the band?" and I just played. And then they said, "Can you play congas?" I said, "Okay," and two months later I was touring with my father. It happened that fast. It was nothing about having to practice. I still don't practice, although now I know I need to because I'm getting older. I played with Terri Lyne and she just inspired me.

I love playing, but it's not just drumming for me. I love the whole music business, so I think of that first. I love playing drums, I love playing percussion, I love singing, I love producing, I love writing and putting the show together—and I love performing in front of people. I'm always running around doing fifty different things, so as far as technique, it's tough for me to find the time to focus on it. I was telling Terri Lyne I thought it was good that she has the technique she has, that it was really important.

She actually got me thinking about how I approach certain things. I finally figured

out that I should use the same stick all the time when I'm switching between instruments. I use a certain size drumstick when I'm playing drums, but when I went to timbales I would use timbale sticks. By the time I started playing the timbales, I couldn't feel the sticks in my hands. So I started using the same drumstick for the timbales as well.

I have been concerned about positioning of the kit, though. In most of the bands I've played with, I've always tried to make sure about where the cymbals were placed. That was one of the things I thought was important, making sure that you could see that I was back there. Sometimes I put them so far up I had to jump to hit them! Then playing with Prince, I played in very high heels, which was challenging.

**Hilary:** I can't play in anything but tennis shoes.

**Sheila:** It didn't matter. I thought it was important to look good and play good. I didn't know it would hurt my back and everything would get all messed up. After playing four years like that, with my cymbals so high, my arm went out and I

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messed up my shoulder, too.

**RF:** Did you grow up thinking that the most important thing about a woman musician was visual and not technical?

**Sheila:** I never thought about it. I just liked dressing up, so I had to figure out how I could dress up and play, because it's not an easy thing to do. It's hard enough wearing heels and walking, let alone playing. Everybody used to say, "How do you play in those high heels?" and then when my back went out, I had no choice but to start playing in tennis shoes. It's weird, because I'm actually learning all over again. I didn't know how wrong it was.

**Kate:** I think you adapt to whatever your circumstances are, and unfortunately because the body does age, at a certain point, you start feeling pain. One of the reasons I started taking lessons recently was because I started feeling pain and I thought I should work on technique.

**Hilary:** Last night when I was playing with the Wild Clams, I couldn't hear anything. I was worried because it was so loud and I was overhitting and I was getting really tired. I felt like I couldn't hang onto the

sticks anymore and I was just trying to bang it out. After the gig, I was feeling weird. I don't want to screw myself up.

**Patty:** I felt the same thing last night. I had to go out and do one song for the MTV Awards, and it's the fastest song in our set. We usually do it as the second to last song, so we're warmed up by the time we get to it. We had to go out and do it cold, so I'm in there, lifting my ten pound weights and doing all my exercises an hour before, and even then, when I went out to play my arms felt like spaghetti. I was aching and trying to push it to that level.

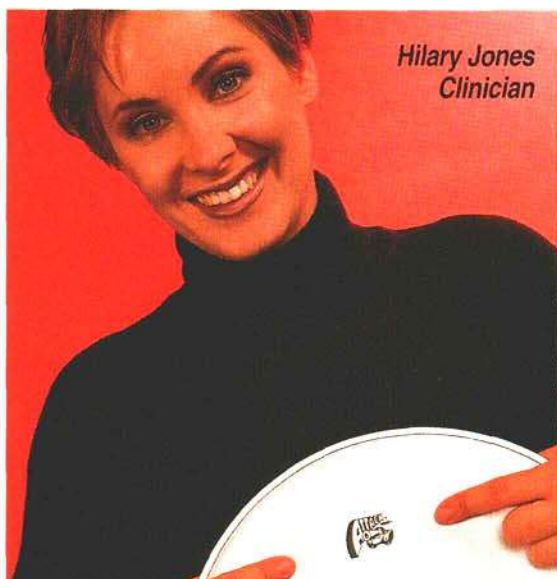
**Kate:** That's something my teacher talks about—warming up. Besides feeling better, you play better when you warm up.

**Terri Lyne:** I didn't start warming up until four years ago.

**Denise:** I get cramps in my hands if I don't.

**Kate:** You don't have to do complicated patterns, you can just play on a pillow. You don't run a marathon without stretching. Drumming is a physical activity and if you're playing a two-hour set—no matter what music you're playing—you need to

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**RF:** Do any of you have tips for women who want to look nice while playing their instruments?

**Denise:** Sandra's [Bernhard] got the greatest stylist, always trying to get me in these body suits, and I love it. But I have to always say, "Order me flat shoes." It really doesn't matter because nobody sees my shoes. I'm really concentrating on my posture now. I can't play in high heels. I don't know how you do it, Sheila. I would definitely break my neck. I have to play in flats.

**Patty:** I play barefoot.

**Sheila:** I did that once and tore the bottom of the skin off my feet because I was playing hard.

**Patty:** You build calluses after a while.

**Denise:** I want to be hot and sexy behind the drums. I want people to know there is a woman behind those drums. I don't dress down. There's a fine line. I don't want people thinking I look like a hooker, either.

**RF:** Do you get taken as seriously when you dress like that, though?

**Hilary:** I've always overcompensated in

the other direction, maybe not even on purpose, but I definitely always thought clothes were bullshit. I'm a T-shirt and jeans chick. I feel like the drumming is either going to stand or fall. I don't want people to notice me because of what I'm wearing.

**Denise:** When I do gigs around town, I try to look really nice. It's already a masculine instrument and I don't want people to go, "Is that a guy or is that a girl?" That's my own thing. I want people to say, "Wow, she's good *and* she looks good."

**Sheila:** I like dressing up. I like going from one extreme to another, from jeans and tennis shoes to heels and a dress. It just depends on how I feel and who I'm playing with, what kind of costume I have to wear for the right look for the band. After the *Glamorous Life* days and *Purple Rain* tour and all that, I started changing as a person—my beliefs and such, not wanting to dress as revealing. I look at pictures of what I was wearing then and I think I was crazy. I just basically covered up the essential parts, and that was it! That was fun in those days, but I'd be embarrassed to do

that now. I grew up.

After wearing those kinds of clothes, some of the guys I'd play with would ask, "What are you going to wear tonight?" It didn't matter how I was going to play; it was, "You sure did look good tonight."

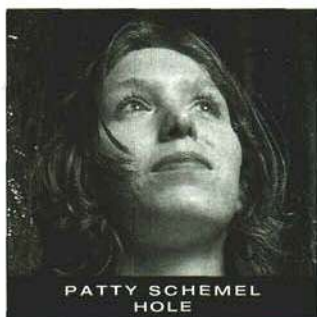
**RF:** Women have a lot of things to consider when playing this instrument. Do any of you have tips or final thoughts for women who want to play drums?

**Denise:** If you really want to play, if you really have it in your heart, don't let anything stop you. I don't think about gender. I just play and do my thing. I won't let it hold me back. If you do, you're really going to get messed up. It's a tough business for a lot of different reasons, but don't let the fact that you're a girl stop you. There are a lot of women drummers now. Just follow your heart.

*(Special thanks to Denise Fraser for nearly single-handedly coordinating everyone's busy schedules, and to Doreen Reardon, whose assistance on the day of the event was invaluable.)*



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# Vince Gill's MARTIN PARKER &





# BILLY THOMAS

## Sharing The Focus

By Tim Smith  
Photos by Rick Malkin



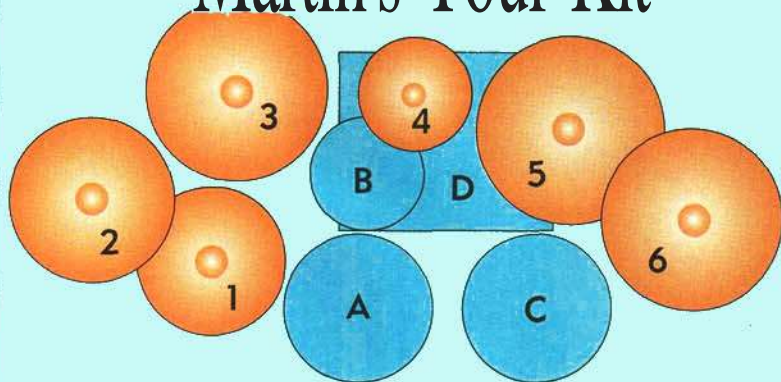


In terms of what catches our drumistic eyes, we've all seen some pretty amazing artists performing in incredible situations. We all thrill to the sights and sounds of gifted players who humble and inspire us. But there are those times when we lust for someone to at least *try* something different—especially when at times it seems that everyone is cloning everyone else. It's these "trailblazers" who generally catch this writer's attention. Sometimes it's the players themselves who are paving a new way, but sometimes it's the circumstances that the players find themselves in that create something new.

The concept of two drummers playing in a band can be an interesting "circumstance." Traditionally, of course, only one drummer has been allowed to be the keeper of the sacred beat—solely responsible for the time, groove, and feel. But in terms of two, generally it's both players responsible for the same. A list of some of the artists and bands who've sported double drummers, either now or



## Martin's Tour Kit



### Drumset: Pearl *Masters Custom*

- A. 3 1/2 x 14 piccolo snare
- B. 10 x 10 tom
- C. 12 x 14 floor tom (mounted)
- D. 16x20 bass drum

### Cymbals: Sabian

- 1. 14" EQ hi-hats
- 2. 16" AA crash
- 3. 17" AA crash
- 4. 10" AA splash
- 5. 20" AA Dry ride
- 6. 18" HH crash

**Hardware:** Pearl, including an old 900 series bass drum pedal (with Rhythm Tech *Balance Beater*), an H855 hi-hat stand, a DR110 rack system, and a PureCussion saddle throne

**Heads:** Remo coated *Emperor* on snare and tom batters, clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms of toms, Evans *EQ 3* on bass drum

**Percussion:** LP mounted tambourines

**Sticks:** Pro-Mark *5B* model with nylon tip, *Blasticks*

in the past, includes the Doobie Brothers, the Allman Brothers, Genesis, the Grateful Dead, Earth, Wind & Fire, Ringo Starr, and King Crimson. One common thread that seems to weave these bands together is the "general" style they play. For the most part, these bands are all pretty high-powered, in-your-face batterie offences. Double drumsets, double backbeat, double volume, double...well, you know.

In the last few months a very different double drummer situation has been added to the "two's who" list. And the artist employing two drummers? Vince Gill. *What*, the country music singer? The guy with a voice sweet enough to make nightingales quit their jobs? The guy with ballads so slow that you need a timetable to catch the next backbeat? What on earth would he want with two drummers?

If you think that this application of the double section would never work, you'll have to stand in line behind drummers Martin Parker and Billy Thomas. At first they didn't think it would work either. "The cool thing about Vince," says Parker, who was holding down the drum





dealing with two high school kids trying to out-duel each other at the battle of the bands. History, experience, and maturity are a huge part of this equation.

Billy Thomas's history started in Fort Myers, Florida, where he picked up the drums at age eleven. At the time there was a wealth of styles of music for a youth to grow by. For Billy, it was the Beatles, Cream, the Doors, Hendrix, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, Sandy Nelson, Tijuana Brass, the Ventures, and later Motown and R&B. Although rock music was his first love, Billy feels that he got a great foundation by having been exposed to that huge variety of styles.

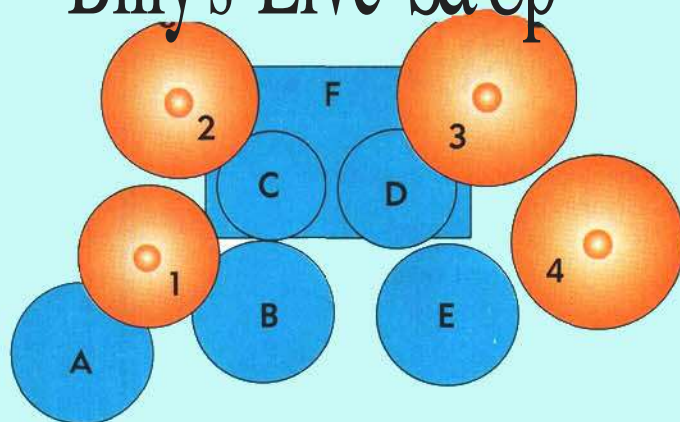
Later on Billy was lured to Los Angeles—where work did not come as easily as he would have liked. He ultimately gave way to delivering furniture. By this time, marriage entered his life. "My wife supported me," Billy admits. "She worked for twelve years while I was getting *my* act together. Finally I got an audition with these guys called the Hudson Brothers. I got the gig and

throne alone, "was that when he thought about adding Billy, he came to me to see how I felt. At first I thought it would never work and that it probably wouldn't even happen. I didn't think the tunes would lend themselves to two kits."

Billy Thomas wasn't sure about the idea, either. "We were still trying to figure out if Vince was just toying with the idea," Thomas says, "or if this was something he really intended on going through with. I felt like sort of a pawn in the situation—part of an experiment, not knowing if it would happen or how long it would last."

Presented with this idea and challenge, Thomas and Parker spoke a few times on the phone, then decided to get together and play. So one afternoon in Martin's garage they set up two kits and went for it. For all of sixteen bars, tops. They both stopped, looked at each other, and immediately knew it was going to work. The groove just sat together, they weren't fighting each other at all. True, sixteen bars of anything might not be enough to know if something works, but these guys have been around and have played a lot of music with a lot of bands. We're not

## Billy's Live Set-Up



**Drumset:** Kenner in white lacquer finish

- A. 5 1/2 x 14 cast aluminum snare
- B. 4x14 *Cardinal Stave* snare
- C. 10x10 tom
- D. 12x12 tom
- E. 14 x 14 floor tom
- F. 18x22 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Sabian

- 1. 14" AA hi-hats
- 2. 17" AA medium crash
- 3. 21" HH heavy ride
- 4. 19" AA medium-thin crash

**Hardware:** Gibraltar rack, Pro-Mark hi-hat stand, Axis bass drum pedal

**Heads:** Remo coated *Emperors* on snare and tom batters, clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms of toms, Evans *Genera* on bass drum batter

**Sticks:** Pro-Mark 5B (hickory) model with wood tip



vowed I would work extremely hard to never have to do anything else again. Thank goodness it's worked out. I lived in L.A. for fourteen years and got involved in the recording scene. I found that I loved doing what little bit I did. It allowed me to meet and play with people I really respected as players and artists.

"I met some guys who turned me on to Rick Nelson's gig," he continues. "This was my first country music gig, and I played with brushes a lot. He had sort of eased into that sound with the Stone Canyon Band. His gig also taught me quite a bit about rockabilly. It was tough because I had never messed with it, but the more I got into it, the more simplistic the grooves were, and the more I started to understand about bass and its importance to those kinds of grooves."

Sometime later Billy got a chance to play with Mac Davis. Mac had recently come off of a very successful TV show and was doing mostly Vegas and Tahoe types of venues. After staying on for seven years, it was time for Billy to go again.

"I call it the Beverly Hillbillies move east," Billy laughs. "We packed up an eighty-pound Labrador and moved to Tennessee. My wife wanted to move back to Florida, but there was no work there in the music business, so Nashville was the compromise."

It seems the move was a good idea. "As soon as we arrived in Nashville—literally, we hadn't gotten our furniture yet from the movers—I got a call from a buddy I knew from L.A. asking me to do a vocal session. Vince Gill was on that session. This was like one of those Cinderella stories. I got to know him over the course of the next couple of days, and he asked me what instrument I

played. When I told him, he replied he could definitely use a singing drummer. We got together and I played him an album that I had played on, and that was basically my audition. He hired me and we went out and did some dates.

"I was sharing the drum chair with other drummers, too, because Vince didn't have enough work at that time to keep a steady band," Billy continues. "One of those drummers was Martin Parker. I went away from that situation awhile to play with Emmylou Harris. Then I got a chance to be part of a band, McBride & The Ride. It was a big experience and I have no regrets." After about five years of doing the "band" thing, Billy's situation with McBride suddenly ended.

Just like Thomas, Martin Parker was offered a deal to be a part of a band. He entered into Billy Hill, an ill-fated venture that he found excessive, frustrating, and an overall major headache. In retrospect, he has had a renewal in his philosophy on being an "artist." Half tongue-in-cheek, he says: "Some bands sell platinum, some gold. We sold plywood! My theory now is simple. Play drums, get on bus, ride to next gig, play drums, pick up check, go home. I like being a sideman. You don't have all these meetings to deal with and you don't worry about having to get the right haircut or the right clothes or doing an interview. Being in a band is a whole other world and can get pretty hairy. If I was twenty years old I might feel differently, but I wouldn't do it again now for anything. Unless, of course, they put the Beatles back together—and Ringo turned into John!"

Though traveling a different road, Martin Parker was headed,

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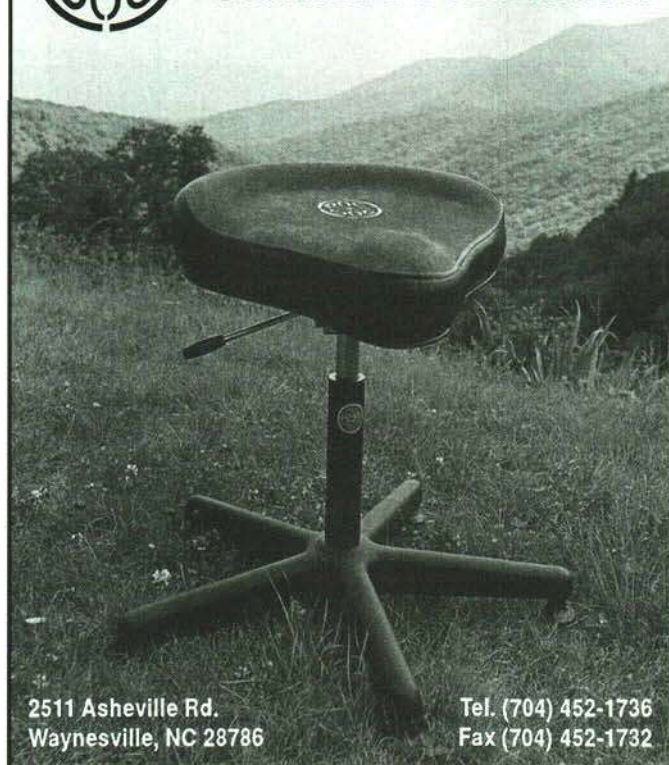
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too, for Los Angeles. Three times. Starting from North Carolina, he ended up in Detroit the first time, then Tennessee. He never got beyond Nashville. Also a child of the sixties, Martin's roots started with the Beatles, but because of older bandmates, he got into James Brown, Chicago, Blood, Sweat & Tears, and all that greasy stuff emerging from a small town in Alabama called Muscle Shoals.

Martin's first professional gig was with a jazz trio from Detroit with Howard Hangar, an ordained Methodist minister, playing church services all over the country. The first trip to Nashville came in 1974 when he and some guys from Carolina pooled their money to build and run Mississippi Whiskers, a bar that turned into a sort of writer's hangout. Parker left shortly after that, only to come back for good in 1977—but not as a drummer. He quit playing around 1975 and came to Nashville as a recording engineer. Getting a job in a local studio, he saw the likes of Jerry Kroon, Kenny Malone, and Larrie Londin pass through regularly.

"Upon hearing these guys play, I thought that I wasn't good enough to do sessions," Martin recalls. "Then, the more I got to hang out with these guys and get to know them, I realized that

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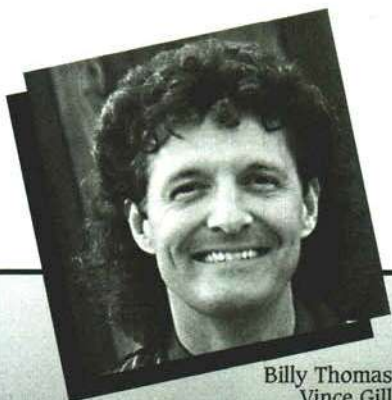
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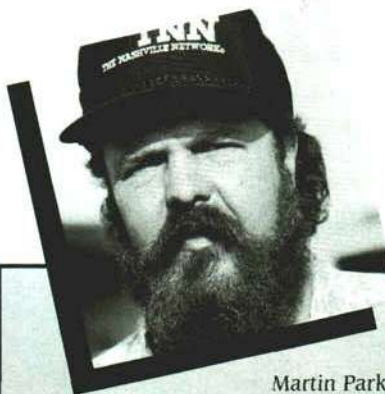


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## Doublin' Up

Here are the albums **Martin Parker** lists as the ones most representative of his drumming...

### Artist

Ricky Skaggs  
Alison Krauss  
Jerry Douglas

### Album Title

Live In London  
I've Got That Old Feeling  
Plant Early

...and here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

### Artist

Aretha Franklin  
Otis Redding  
Little Feat  
The Band  
The Allman Brothers Band  
Jimmy Smith

### Album Title

Best Of  
Best Of  
Waiting For Columbus  
Rock Of Ages  
Live At The Fillmore East  
I've Got My Mojo Workin'

### Drummer

Roger Hawkins  
Al Jackson  
Richie Hayward  
Levon Helm  
Jaimoe & Butch Trucks  
Grady Tate

Here are the albums **Billy Thomas** lists as the ones most representative of his drumming...

### Artist

Emmylou Harris  
George Dukas  
McBride & The Ride  
McBride & The Ride  
McBride & The Ride  
The Remingtons  
Marty Stuart  
Marty Brown

### Album Title

Bluebird  
George Dukas  
Burnin' Up The Road  
Sacred Ground  
Hurry Sundown  
Blue Frontier  
Hillbilly Rock  
High And Dry

...and here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

### Artist

Little Feat  
Robben Ford  
John Hiatt  
Delbert McClinton  
The Police  
Sly Stone  
Miles Davis  
Mahavishnu Orchestra

### Album Title

Let It Roll  
Talk To Your Daughter  
Bring The Family  
I'm With You  
any  
Fresh  
any with...  
Inner Mounting Flame

### Drummer

Richie Hayward  
Vinnie Colaiuta  
Jim Keltner  
Eddie Bayers  
Stewart Copeland  
Andy Newmark  
Tony Williams  
Billy Cobham

yes, I could. On one occasion, it just so happened that Kroon was supposed to do a 10:00 date, and he called ten minutes before—which was totally unlike him—to cancel. So the engineer said, 'Martin plays drums, put him in there.' I had literally not picked up a pair of sticks in at least six months. I did it, and as luck would have it, two weeks later one of the guys on that session called me to do another. That's how it happened. I had no intentions of pursuing a drumming career at that time.

"Over the years," he continues, "you meet certain people and certain things happen. One night I got a call to sub a blues gig at Mississippi Whiskers, and there was this guitarist playing, but sitting offstage, and I couldn't see him. He sounded so

familiar! Finally the light hit him, and it was J.J. Cale. We talked, and two weeks later he called me to play a session. Through him I met Don Schlitz, and on and on.... I was like the writer's drummer for a time, and I worked everything I could get my hands on. I guess I did sessions for about five years. Then I got a road gig with Gail Davies and did that for around a year and a half. Then I got offered the Ricky Skaggs job. While doing that gig I did some more recording projects with people like Willie Nelson, Marie Osmond, and Alison Krauss."

Enter Vince Gill—again. By this time Vince was a major star. He had won just about every award possible for his singing and writing, and was looking for some



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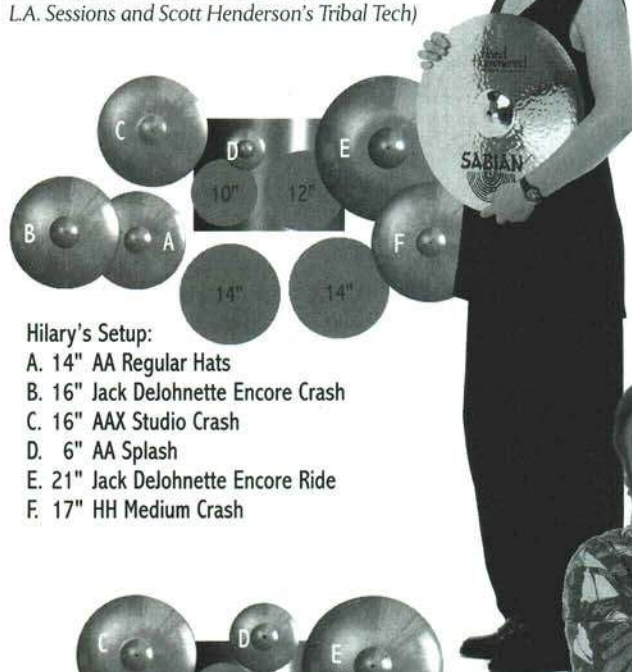
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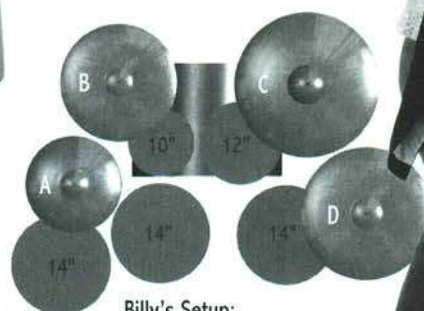
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BILLY THOMAS (Country, Rock, and R&B with Nashville star, Vince Gill)



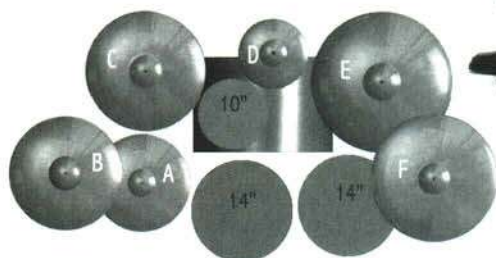
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- B. 16" Jack DeJohnette Encore Crash
- C. 16" AAX Studio Crash
- D. 6" AA Splash
- E. 21" Jack DeJohnette Encore Ride
- F. 17" HH Medium Crash



### Billy's Setup:

- A. 14" AA Regular Hats
- B. 17" AA Medium Crash
- C. 21" HH Heavy Ride
- D. 19" AA Medium Thin Crash



### Martin's Setup:

- A. 14" HH EQ Hats
- B. 16" AAX Stage Crash
- C. 17" AAX Studio Crash
- D. 10" AA Splash
- E. 20" AA Dry Ride
- F. 18" HH Medium Thin Crash

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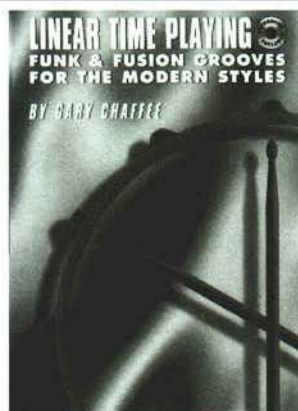
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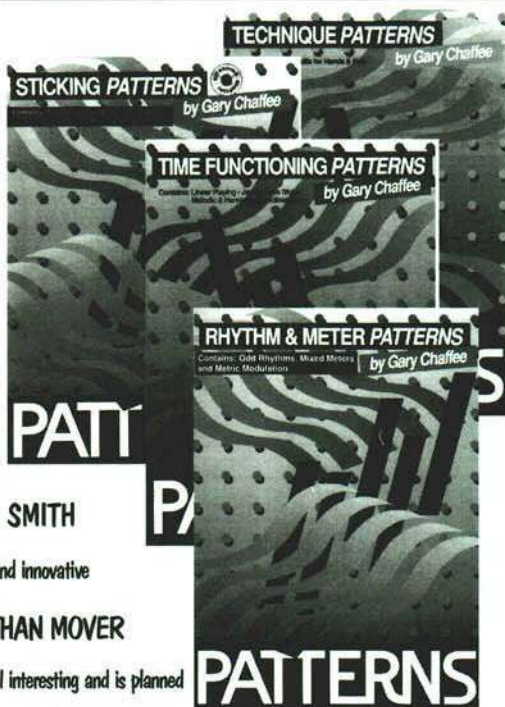
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more fun. Martin Parker was already drumming for Vince, but the singer had something else in mind. Gill admits, "I didn't necessarily want two drummers, but I love Billy. He's like a brother. I felt bad for him the way things went down with the McBride thing. I called him up and said, 'Shoot, we'll just have two drummers. It'll be like a big old train coming down the tracks.' So we got together and played. *Man*, it just felt awesome! The neat thing is that Martin and Billy don't always play the same things together. They split up their parts, each playing a portion of the beat, and it fits together to make one powerful groove."

Although in the beginning it took Martin and Billy only about sixteen bars to sense that they could play together comfortably, actually doing it with the whole band was a bit more of a struggle. When the whole band played, many factors inevitably came to light. Groove placement? Who plays what layer? Front, back, or middle of the beat? Two crashes or one? Who fills? Who lays out? Billy's natural feel is more on the up side, Martin's more on the back. So where do they meet? "Drums are not usually a team instrument," Billy says. "Usually the drummer is the main control of the time and the direction of the feel. I think sharing that with another person involves another level of maturity, and so I think there is a lot to be learned through this situation."

Time placement was an interesting topic for the two drummers. "Martin plays more behind the beat than I do," Billy says. "That's something you would never think about until you started playing with another drummer consistently. Here's another person that has a different approach. When I got into the band, I was real hesitant about just jumping in and trying to fit things in that might not want to go. If anything I choose to play less and not inject anything into what they're doing. That's what playing for the song is all about. I've really got to listen to this a little differently. It brings out the maturity in you as a musician 'cause you're thinking about the whole band, the arrangement, and the song."

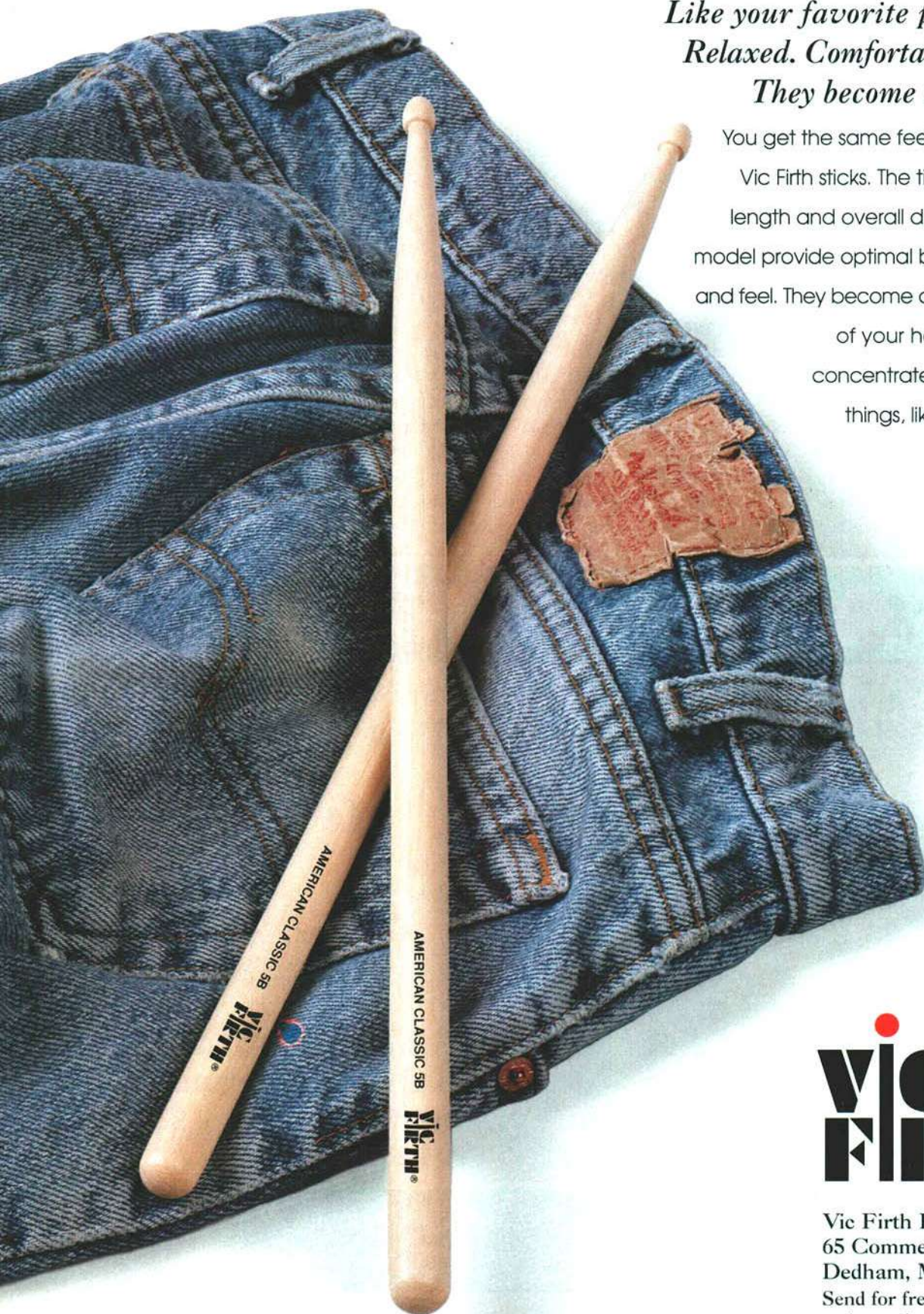
"You really have to leave your ego at home," adds Martin. "Meshing our two different approaches has its up sides. We definitely influence each other in a positive way. I'm a rimshot guy. I've always dug



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the rimshot approach as opposed to center of the drum. Billy plays it just the other way, and I have drawn on some of that. He lays his bass drum in a totally different place, time wise, to where I put it. I always lay mine farther back, but now in certain songs, I will adjust that placement and in turn, the whole groove will take on a different feel. I don't know whether Vince knew that there would be that much difference in our styles when he put us together."

Thomas also acknowledges those differences and continues to look for ways to fit into the groove that Martin and Jimmy Johnson [bass] have already established. "Jimmy is really another part of this whole rhythm section, and to me he's every bit as important. He's that third part that we rest on when we can't get it together on certain nights. I've often wondered what it's like to be between two drumsets. It has got to be awesome!"

"Or total hell," quips Parker. "It doesn't seem that Jimmy has to split the difference between us. It's real important for both of us to lock with him because we don't always play everything together. We break up grooves and split up the layers, so that I might be playing the kick drum part while Billy does whatever the hands would do. Or we might have two separate variations of the same beat going on at the same time, but trying to make it sound like one drummer playing. On some songs, it's really unusual."

"Less is more' has turned into a motto that we have to think by," Parker says. "It helps with the cleanliness of the parts. And when you have a person like Vince Gill, who has the kind of ears that he does and loves simple grooves, that motto really comes home. Vince is known to be a big ballad singer, so from a drum

standpoint we were real hesitant to play anything together. But he wanted us to. I think it was us, little by little, saying we shouldn't do it a lot."

Vince, who believes that Charlie Watts is the all-time king of rock 'n' roll drumming, echoes the drummers' philosophy: "These guys know what to play, and if that's nothing—totally laying out—then that's what they'll do. They know what they're doing or they wouldn't be at this level. I trust them as much as I think they trust me."

Just this past fall, the pair had a chance to do something unusual on the 1995 CMA awards show. They accompanied Vince, Patty Loveless, Ricky Skaggs, and Mark Knopfler on a new ballad by Gill. Martin plays only on beat 1 with a mallet on a concert bass drum, with an occasional crash on a suspended cymbal. Billy plays quarter notes and 8ths on a hi-hat with a brush and beat 4 on the snare. No bass player. Simple parts unto themselves, yes, but much tougher on the execution.

These sorts of situations are the type that Billy and Martin strive to create within the framework of Vince Gill's music. It's not always easy, but they try to make it interesting. One may play with sticks, while the other will use dowel sticks, adding a different texture to the same beat. They'll frequently take turns playing the same fill in certain tunes, knowing it's going to feel different.

Upon seeing their live show, it was obvious that they like to experiment and wear different musical hats. One hat that Billy Thomas wears in many tunes is one of background vocalist. Does this compound things for him? "Sometimes it does," he admits.

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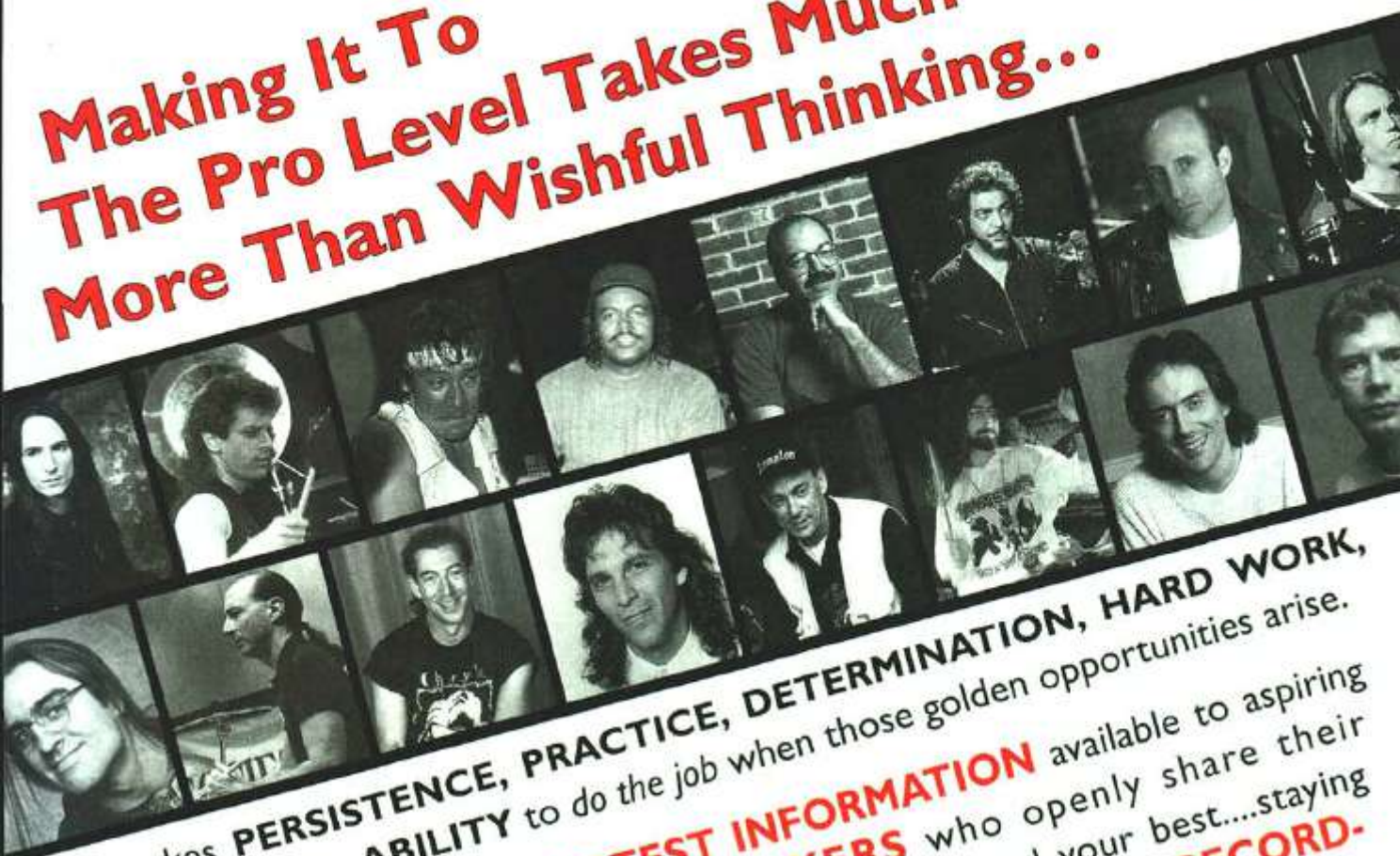


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"In a song like 'What The Cowgirls Do,' Martin's playing 8ths on the hi-hat and 2 and 4 on the snare. I'm playing a slow train beat on the snare drum, singing at the same time, *and* trying to remember stops and turn-arounds. *Man!*

Sometimes when I'm singing, my time will move into a different place, because I'm having to phrase with the other background singers or with Vince's lead vocal. It sometimes really pulls on me, and it's great to have a safety net in Martin to keep me locked in. It's good for me as a drummer in that it improves my overall sense of time while I'm singing. It's a big awareness thing."

Being the other drummer—the "C.P.O." (Chief Percussion Officer)—Martin Parker is the designated leader of the section, which also includes percussionist Dawn Sears. Delegating parts and being the person who makes sure things are working takes diplomacy, confidence, and above all, honesty—all admired traits of which Parker says he learned from long-time friend, the late Larrie Londin.

"This business, I think, can cut through you a lot," Martin says. "There are times when you need to be quite diplomatic, but at the same time you've got to say where you're coming from. That was Larrie to a tee. He said exactly what he thought and he didn't care how big a person they were in the industry. And the thing about it was he was always right! That honesty is where I got it from, from being around him."

And Billy adds, "And I've seen him do it, too. All drummers, I think, could benefit from this. There are a lot of situations where drummers are put in the hot seat and put down and made to feel like they are expendable. Martin is secure and mature enough to know that if this artist or player turns around and yells, 'This is your fault!' he can actually go back and say, 'Okay, well maybe I did mess up,' but at the same time know what he's really capable of. It's important for us drummers to realize that we all work hard on our instruments and that we are as credible and as important as any other instrumentalist. Self-respect and confidence—that's the real deal."

"You've got to take a certain amount of bull," Martin says. "On a scale of one to ten, you take about a two. But there's no need to put up with the rest. The biggest lie in this business is, 'You'll never work in this town

again.' Now, that's real bull! There is always somebody to work for. Be it the 231 Rest Stop Tavern, the CMA show, somebody's record or tour, or whatever, you can always work. You have to have confidence. I used to not have it. It was like, I'm not good enough. Then it hit me one day. I was thinking, 'Well, all of these people keep calling me, I didn't call them.'

"When people would call me for a date," he continues, "it didn't matter what style of music it was. I would create something to fit the song and make it work. It wouldn't necessarily be what so-and-so would play, but it was good for that music in that situation. That's where Larrie was and guys like Eddie Bayers are today, having the confidence to say, 'I can do this.'

"The classic Larrie Londin story, for me, was told at his funeral. A guy who was in a band with him years ago got up and said just a few words. He said, 'Larrie and I played together when he was sixteen years old, and at that time he said he was going to play with Elvis. He did play with Elvis. Everything he set his mind to, he accomplished.'

"When I was in high school," Martin continues, "I wanted to be the drummer on the *Tonight Show*. That's where my eyes were set. I played drums eight hours a day. I said I would learn how to do a left-handed roll. I never did, and no, I was not the drummer on the *Tonight Show*. But I played with the *Tonight Show* band, and so has Billy. My point is, I've achieved at least part of my goal, and I've done things that I never dreamed possible."

These two drummers have seen a lot in the music business and have interesting views on the next generation of drummers coming up. "There are times when a kid will come and want to know how to 'make it' in this business," Parker says, "and you'll want to give it all to him—all the info, the ups and downs. You think that maybe they won't have to go through all the bull that we did. 'Here's the way, we just paved it for you.' But this business ain't that way. You take a number, wait in line with the rest of us, and do the best you can."

"It's the same thing as parenting," Thomas says. "You cannot tell a child, 'Here's that pitfall, here's how not to fall into it.' As much as you would like to, you can't. All I can say to up-and-coming drummers is, when you're given the opportunity,

be absolutely as prepared as possible. Take the whole experience in, *really* take it in. Think about and absorb every variable."

"And in the end," Martin chimes in, "with all of your preparation, you're still gonna go play a dive and make two bucks!"

"And love it, just like we did!"

Shifts in life's focus and career come and go in the music business, as in any profession. It just seems that in the world of drumming, age usually brings about a maturation process. Being the "greatest" and being successful takes on a whole different meaning. No matter how much we practice, not everybody is going to be allowed to be the next superstar. Sometimes it takes a good long time to realize that.

In a recent *Modern Drummer* interview, one of our great artists talked about his philosophy of being a musician. His attitude was, "I am third." In terms of music, it is interpreted as, "music first; band second; me third." Martin Parker and Billy Thomas have willingly and unselfishly—for the one and only important goal, the music—accepted third place. Of course, they'll have to share that, too.



## MD's "Drumkit Of The Month"

Every drummer is proud of his or her drums, but some go to special efforts to create very personal kits. These might involve unusual arrangements of drums, special finishes, unique mounting methods, or innovative staging ideas. If you have a kit that you think other drummers would enjoy seeing, MD invites you to send us a photo. We will select photos from among those sent to appear in future issues in MD's *Drumkit Of The Month* department. The criteria for our selection will be kits that are **visually interesting** and/or **musically unusual**. We are **not** looking for kits that are simply big.

### Photo Requirements

1. Photos must be in color, and of high quality. (35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered. Polaroids cannot be accepted.)
2. You may send more than one view of the kit, but only one photo will be published.
3. Photos should be of drums only; no people should be in the shot.
4. Drums should be photographed against a neutral background (a sheet, drape, blank wall, etc.). Avoid "busy" backgrounds such as in your basement, garage, or bedroom.
5. Be sure that those attributes of your kit that make it special are clearly visible in the photo.

Send your photo(s) to Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Please note that photos cannot be returned, so don't send any originals you can't bear to part with.





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# MODERN DRUMMER'S 18TH ANNUAL READERS POLL



The purpose of MD's annual poll is to recognize drummers and percussionists in all fields of music whose musical efforts—recordings, live performances, or educational activities—have been especially notable during

the past year. It is in no way meant to suggest that one musician is "better" than another. Rather, it is to call attention to those performers who, through their outstanding musicianship, have been inspirational to us all.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must use the official *MD* ballot—no photocopies.
2. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box. See the category descriptions below for clarification.
3. Make only one selection in each category. (It is not necessary to vote in every category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.)
4. Affix appropriate postage and mail the entire ballot to *Modern Drummer's* offices at the address shown on the reverse of the ballot card.

5. Ballots must be postmarked no later than **March 1, 1996**. Results will be announced in the July '96 issue of *MD*.

**6. Return Address/Subscription Drawing:** Fill in the return address lines on the address side of the ballot to be eligible for MD's free-subscription drawing. Three ballots will be drawn at random; the winners will receive one-year subscriptions to *Modern Drummer*.

## CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

### HALL OF FAME

Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made a historic contribution to the art of drumming. Current members of the Hall of Fame are not eligible for this category. Those members are: **Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Joe Morello, Carl Palmer, Bill Bruford, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Jeff Porcaro, Larrie Londin, and Elvin Jones.**

### ALL-ABOUT

This category is not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer. Rather, it is to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications, instead of in one specific band.

### STUDIO

This category is for drummers known as multi-session players who record with many artists, or who are involved in projects such as jingles, TV, and film scores. (Do not include recording artists who spend time in the studio, but only as a member of one group.)

### MAINSTREAM JAZZ

This category is restricted to drummers in small-group, acoustic jazz.

### ELECTRIC JAZZ

This category is reserved for drummers who perform in contemporary jazz, fusion, or jazz-rock.

### UP & COMING

This category is reserved for the most promising artist brought to the public's attention within the past twelve months.

### PERCUSSIONIST

This category is for artists noted for their performance on ethnic, hand, and specialty percussion instruments (as opposed to drumset).

### RECORDED PERFORMANCE

Vote for your favorite recording by a drummer as a leader or as a member of a group. Limit your selection to recordings released within the past twelve months. Please include the artist's name, the complete title of the song, and the album from which it came.





## MD'S HONOR ROLL

Artists who have been selected by the *MD* readership as winners in any one category of the Readers Poll for a total of five years are placed on MD's Honor Roll. This is our way of recognizing the unique talent and lasting popularity of those special artists. Artists placed on the Honor Roll in any given category are subsequently ineli-

gible in that category, although they remain eligible in other categories. (The exception to this is the "Recorded Performance" category, which will remain open to all artists.) Artists who have achieved Honor Roll status (and are now ineligible in the category shown) are listed below.

Alex Acuna: Latin/Brazilian Percussionist

**Airto:** Latin American and Latin/Brazilian Percussionist

**Louie Bellson:** Big Band Drummer

**Gary Burton:** Mallet Percussionist

**Dennis Chambers:** Funk Drummer

**Anthony J. Cirone:** Classical Percussionist

**Vinnie Colaiuta:** Studio Drummer

**Phil Collins:** Pop/Mainstream Rock Drummer

**Vic Firth:** Classical Percussionist

**Steve Gadd:** All-Around Drummer and Studio Drummer

**David Garibaldi:** R&B and Funk Drummer

**Larrie Londin:** Country Drummer

**Rod Morgenstein:** Rock and Progressive Rock Drummer

**Neil Peart:** Rock Drummer and Multi-Percussionist

**Buddy Rich:** Big Band Drummer

**Ed Shaughnessy:** Big Band Drummer

**Steve Smith:** All-Around Drummer

**Lars Ulrich:** Hard Rock Drummer

**Dave Weckl:** Electric Jazz Drummer

**Tony Williams:** Jazz and Mainstream Jazz Drummer





# Phrasing With Broken Doubles: Part 1

by Paul DeLong

## MUSIC KEY

H.H.	X	Cowbell
S.D.	●	
B.D.	●	

The idea of breaking up double strokes between two sound sources is an old one, but with a little bit of creativity it can be turned into a great way to play musical phrases on the drumset.

For clarity's sake (and because it sounds good), in the following examples all right-hand doubles will be broken between the cowbell (reinforced with the bass drum) and snare, and all left-hand doubles will be broken between the closed hi-hat (again reinforced with the bass drum) and the snare. As an option, the ride, crash, or Chinese cymbals could easily be substituted for the cowbell and hi-hat notes.

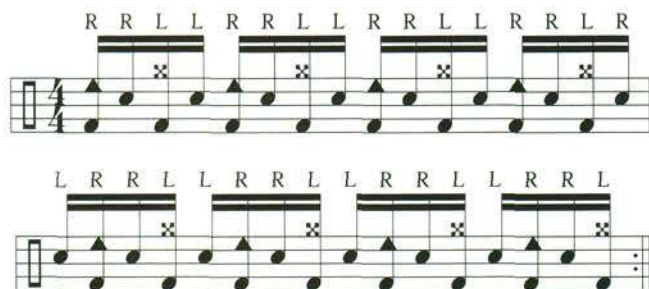
The basic system for this exercise is based on the following example. The 8th notes on the beat are played using this broken double pattern:



All of the offbeat patterns are created by simply shifting the whole thing over by one 16th note, like this:



For a basic example to help you get this concept under your hands, let's put the two examples together in a repeating two-bar pattern. (The last 16th of the first bar has been changed to a right-hand stroke to avoid playing three left-hand strokes in a row.)



The next example is the same except that the pattern has been condensed to one bar, with the turnaround coming halfway through.



Now that you understand how the concept works, we can apply the formula to various familiar rhythmic patterns. For example, a samba-based rhythm such as:



could be played as:



If you change the sticking slightly, the same rhythm becomes a two-bar pattern, with the hands changing direction throughout and the sticking being completely reversed in the second bar. (Once you get these stickings under your hands, you'll find that they flow quite naturally. So don't be put off by the initial difficulty!)



Here's another example using a 3/2 rumba clave (written in 4/4) as a rhythmic base.



This could be played as:



Experiment with your own rhythmic motifs using this broken-double concept. It's a great alternative to the same old "around the toms excursion" when filling or soloing.

Incidentally, all of the above patterns also sound great when played over continuous double-bass 16ths. You'll need to use a drop clutch on the hi-hat to maintain the closed sound while playing the double bass.

In Part 2 we'll look at some odd phrasing in 16ths and triplets utilizing this broken-double concept.





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# Brazilian Beats For Drumset

by Chuck Silverman

## MUSIC KEY



Brazil's rhythms are rich and varied. Some drummers, under the misconception that samba and baião (bye-ow') are Brazil's only viable rhythmic exports, might dismiss the idea of delving deeper into other Brazilian rhythms. This might be an error.

Recently I had the honor to perform at a Percussion Festival in Recife, Pernambuco, a state in northeast Brazil. [Editor's Note: See the feature article on "The Drummers Of Brazil" in the December 1995 issue of MD.] That part of Brazil is a treasure trove of multi-layered, richly textured rhythms. One of these is called baque (bah'-kee). Very briefly, assorted rhythms of baque are used in Maracatu, a processional that is a mixture of African, Portuguese, and native Indian cultures. The Maracatu processional ritual has its roots in the state of Pernambuco, whose capital is Recife (He-see-fee). There are many forms of baque, but this article will examine one particularly common form found in the city.

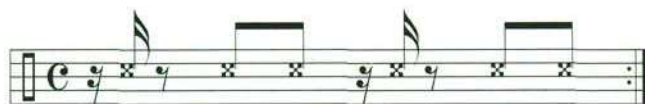
Let's first look at the traditional drums and the parts they play, and then see how they can be applied to the drumset. There are three groups of instruments found in baque. The surdos are large wood drums with goatskin heads, which are rope-tensioned. Drum sizes are approximately 18"-22" in diameter, and typically three of these drums are used. They are called—from large to small—marcante, meiao, and repique. The rhythms of the three surdos are somewhat alike, and they weave an extremely intense tapestry. There is a basic pulse to the pattern, and here are three examples that show the essential accents.



Next comes the rhythms of the caixa (ca-sha), or snare drum. There are many variations of the rhythms performed by the caixa. Here is one example.



The gongue is a large metal cowbell-like instrument. Once again, there are many variations. Here is one of the most common.



There are various ways the drummers of Recife apply these rhythms to the drumset. Here is the first one I learned. The basic pulse is in the snare and bass drum, with the hi-hat (foot) locking in the groove.

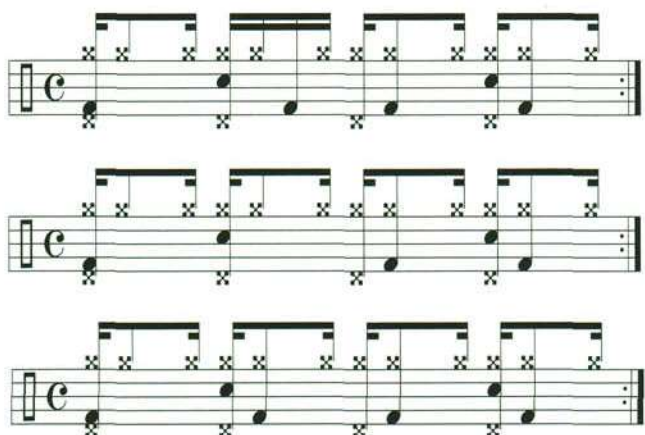


The following example uses the toms to emulate the surdos. Once again, the hi-hat locks in the pocket.



Influenced by backbeat-oriented rhythms, I have developed some applications that always emphasize the main groove, albeit sometimes with an eye towards developing independence.

The next examples orchestrate one of the most important rhythms characteristic of baque. It should be played on a "ride" surface, preferably a dry sound, like the shell of a tom, a ribbon crasher, a drumset tambourine, etc. The backbeat on 2 and 4 is on the snare. The bass drum plays the surdo part (three variations) with the hi-hat playing quarter notes.





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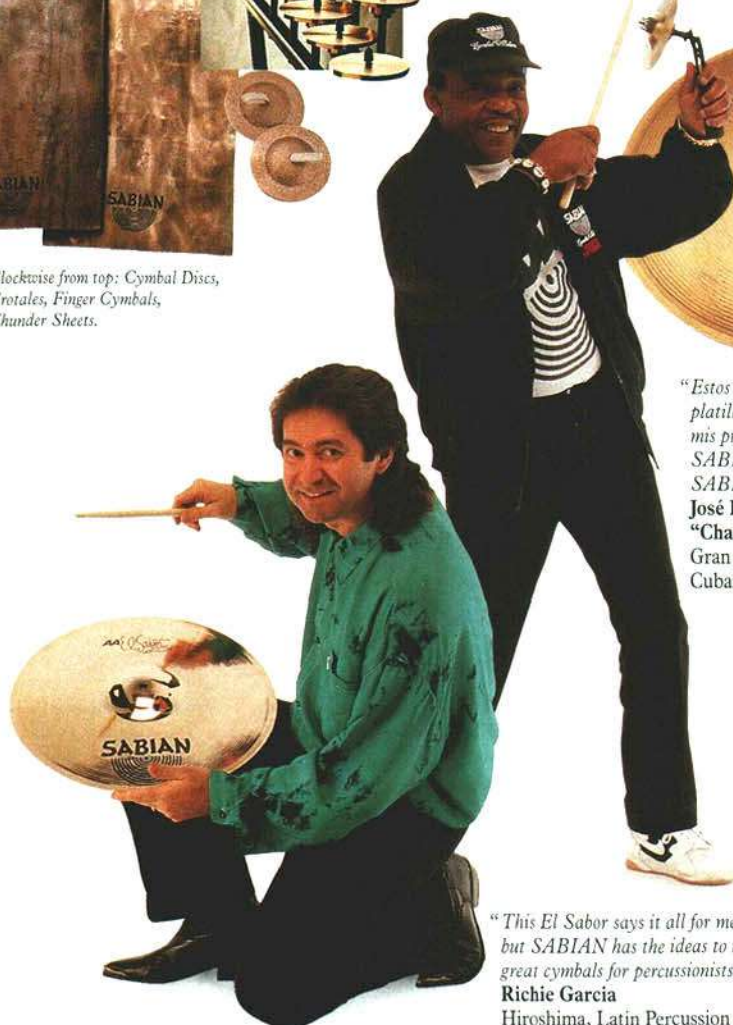
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# Progressive Accents In 3/4

by Joe Morello

Transcribed by Marvin Burock



The following exercise is designed to give you the ability to accent anywhere within a measure. These examples should be played slowly at first, keeping your arms and wrists relaxed at all times. Play each example twenty times before moving on to the next one. Eventually you can skip around, combine examples, or play down the whole page.

This exercise can also be played on the drumset. For example, you can play the accented notes on the tom-toms and the unac-

cented notes on the snare drum. For more of a challenge, try playing 8th notes on the bass drum (single or double bass) while playing the 8th-note triplets on the toms and snare. This results in a two-against-three polyrhythm.

You can also experiment with various dynamic levels. Try playing the unaccented notes *p* while playing the accented notes *mp*. These examples are just to give you basic ideas. Be creative and expand upon them. Have fun.

1 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

2 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

3 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

4 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

5 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L



6

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

7

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

8

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

9

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

10

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

11

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

12

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

13

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L



14 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

15 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

16 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

17 R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L



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## RECORDINGS

## JOSHUA REDMAN QUARTET

Spirit Of The Moment  
Live At The Village Vanguard  
(Warner Bros. 45923-2)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ 1/2

Brian Blade: dr  
Joshua Redman: sx  
Peter Martin: pno  
Christopher Thomas: bs

Brian Blade is a young drummer gifted with talent and technique, and raised in an environment that nurtures both. The twenty-something Blade is an amalgam of the best jazz drummers of the past fifty years, his skill refined, tested, and tried in the hotbed musical culture of New Orleans.

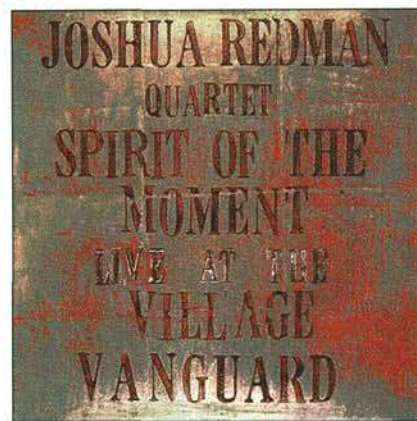
Throughout this live recording, Blade caresses, assails, and tears asunder the music with imagination and excitement. His drumming recalls Blakey's grit, Elvin's controlled bombast, Mickey Roker's charm, and Jo Jones' exacting simplicity.

On "Count Me Out" and "Herbs And Roots" Blade maneuvers jigsawing melodies into Redman's nail-biting solos with exotic cymbal and rim work. He shows inventiveness on "Second Snow," underpinning Martin's lovely piano solo with unusual snare rolls and hi-hat flurries, while approaching "Dialogue" with an equally clever full-set orchestral treatment. "St. Thomas" is a swift Afro samba, with Blade punching and pulsing up to a series

of fours with Redman. Here he matches traditional licks with unusual phrasing—all with Caribbean panache. Brian then ushers in the meditative "Mt. Zion" with chiming cymbals, rumbling toms, and crescendoing snare rolls, creating a swell of diffuse drumming. "Slapstick" nears the end of the night, with Redman and Blade romping through a humorous call-and-response.

Wonderfully recorded so you can hear every nuance of the instruments, this is a time-capsule performance of mid-'80s jazz classicism. Pleasing to the ear, somewhat engaging to the mind, it shows no new ground being broken by Redman. It does prove, however, that whenever Brian Blade plays the drums, the earth will move.

Ken Micallef



## JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

After The Rain  
(Verve 314 527 467-2)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕



Elvin Jones: dr  
John McLaughlin: gtr  
Joey DeFrancesco: org

Normally I wouldn't get so grouchy about mixes, miking, and all that techy stuff. But the mighty Elvin has one of the most *personal* sounds in drum history—and in this case, his thunderous voice falls victim to technology. The primal force named "Elvin" could make a wind-up monkey's snare sound like a deep, fearsome ceremonial drum, but somehow his kit

translated to disc this time with a digital iciness. The hissing cymbals dominate with a thin, dime-ish "ECM sound" while the trademark throaty waves and rolling triplets are present but suppressed beneath it all. He's burning away, but the clean machines are policing it. (Paging Rudy Van Gelder?)

Nevertheless, the trio turns in brilliant takes of Coltrane and Trane-esque tunes, making the oft-treaded material their own. The space afforded by the organ/guitar trio—a format in which Elvin is rarely heard—brings out the best in each player's chops/taste balance. Since signing with Verve, McLaughlin has released one beauty after another.

On the final title cut, McLaughlin's gorgeous tribute to Trane's hymn-like spiritual balladry, Elvin gets his revenge. While going full-bore on swelling tom rolls, his famous dirty growling leaks

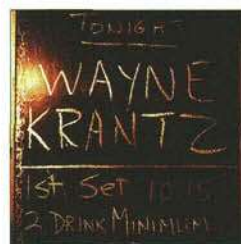
through. Take *that*, Mr. Microphone!

Jeff Potter

## WAYNE KRANTZ TRIO

2 Drink Minimum  
(Enja 90432)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕



Zach Danziger: dr  
Wayne Krantz: gtr  
Lincoln Goines: bs

Holding court at the Manhattan watering hole known as Bar 55, the Wayne Krantz Trio has been toiling here in relative obscurity for almost six years. That's more a comment on the state of New York jazz than on Krantz, as

this amazing CD proves, cut after remarkable cut.

In a kinetic relationship that borders on frightening, Krantz, Danziger, and Goines are easily the most exciting trio working rock, funk, *or* fusion. Elevating improvisational electric music to a new art, the group acts as three limbs of a whole body. Krantz's tunes—bristling vehicles of harrowing accents, challenging structures, exhilarating time changes, and emotionally passionate melodies—provide plenty of room to blast down the beer-drenched walls.

Krantz is a marvel of dexterity, mixing lower-register riffage with searing high-end notes, sounding like two guitarists playing at once. Wrenching memorable, stinging melodies from his old Telecaster, Krantz sails through brawling arpeggios, sculptured chord fragments, and pretty textures for a refreshingly original approach to the guitar.



Danziger has been a drummer to watch since his early days with Michel Camilo, but it's here that he really shines. Zach matches Krantz's spiraling string language with note-for-note immediacy. Maneuvering frenetic arrangements, he is both sensitive ("Dove Gloria") and full-blown furious ("Whippersnapper"). Cut from the Gadd/Colaiuta cloth, Danziger has developed a style built on aggressive time conception, unique bass drum/tom figures, unusual independence, note displacement, and skewed, shrapnelized funk. And don't forget huge, very talented ears.

This is not a safe CD. Mixing high-octane drama, blazing technique, and engaging melodies with terrific musicianship, this is a trio that deserves a wider audience.

**Ken Micallef**

ing their earlier work so much. But after several dozen listens I have to say that this might be the most important double rock album since the Clash's *London Calling*.

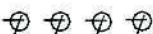
The new and improved, drug-free Jimmy Chamberlin shows why he is alternative music's Bill Bruford. Focusing on a left-field, jazz-influenced approach combined with punk energy, he creates new textures on "Love," one of producer Flood's techno jobs. On "Galapagos" he explores various dynamic levels and creates *art*. On the single and video of "Bullet With Butterfly Wings," Chamberlin demonstrates an almost Peart-ish creativity and energy that harkens back to early Rush albums in complexity and groove.

While Smashing Pumpkins has been lumped in with the alternative music scene, fans of Return To Forever, the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Yes, and Rush should check this out. This is the future of progressive music. Highly recommended.

**Adam Seligman**

## VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Brasil: A Century Of Song**  
(Blue Jackel Entertainment 5000-2)



Compilations too often revolve around the "Greatest Hits" come-on. Those golden words may sell units, but they

can also denote the most middle-of-the-road material an artist has to offer. In contrast, the beauty of this four-CD boxed set (also available separately) lies in its painstaking research and discerning selections, favoring wall-to-wall *great* cuts over obligatory hits. Most of the cuts, spanning from 1939 to 1994, have not been previously released domestically.

Disc one, "Folk And Traditional," focuses on the roots of samba, the *choro* style evolved from turn-of-the-century instrumental dance bands, and field recordings including the drumming of a Candomble (West African religion practiced in Bahia) ceremony. Disc two, "Carnaval," features the infectious sambas bred by that mother-of-all street festivals. Disc three, "The Bossa Nova Era," opens with Joao Gilberto's classic 1958 take of Jobim's "A Felicidade," followed by cuts reflecting bossa's ongoing merger with other styles. Disc four, "Musica Popular Brasileira," spotlights the movement, beginning in the '60s, that absorbed rock, pop, and modern jazz influences into the native sound.

Above all, the common bloodline linking the many Brazilian styles is that unmistakable rhythmic *feel*; for drummers this 65-track/48-page book set is a motherlode. From the subtle, amazing eight-minute berimbau solo by Papete to the explosive drumming of the *escolas de samba* (samba "schools") to the jazz/funk-influenced kit grooves driving modern artists like Ivan Lins and Milton Nascimento, there's a wealth of

world-class percussion here. Check out the "hits" some other time; this is a smarter introduction to the Big Picture.

**Jeff Potter**

## THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

**Peel Slowly And See**  
(Polydor 31452 7077-2)



**Maureen Tucker:** perc, vcl  
**Billy Yule:** dr  
**Lou Reed:** vcl, gtr, hrm, pno  
**John Cale:** vcl, pno, via, sarinda, celeste, bs, elec vla, org  
**Sterling Morrison:** gtr, bs, vcl  
**Nico:** vcl

**Doug Yule:** bs, vcl

*Peel Slowly And See* is a fitting title for the recently released Velvet Underground boxed set. This package provides the listener with a layered, comprehensive look at one of rock's most influential bands—as well as a study of Moe Tucker, a notable if debated drummer.

While critics continue to question Tucker's technical ability, she clearly pioneered a new style of drumming. While most rock drummers of the time contented themselves with riding their cymbals and hitting the snare on 2 and 4, Tucker often kept the beat on the toms and bass, even using a propped-up bass drum as a "riding" tom for a while. This percussive

## SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

**ABE LABORIEL, JR.** plays with just the right amount of energy and style to help mold Jonatha Brooke & the Story's *Plumb* (GRP) into an adult-alternative winner. Violent Femmes founder **VICTOR DELORENZO** displays some too-long hidden talents as a writer/leader (and drummer) on his new *Pancake Day* (bFrecedings). *Stone To Flesh* (Medium Productions) is the latest release by **STEVE JANSEN** & Richard Barbieri, drummer and guitarist, respectively, of Britain's late, great Japan. Jansen constructs teasingly captivating drum patterns among the duo's atmospheric aural snapshots. Early Parliament-Funkadelic guitarist Tal Ross has released his first album in twenty-five years, *Giant Shirley* (CGRC), featuring original P-Funk "thumpasaurian" **JEROME "BIGFOOT" BRAILEY** providing the appropriate furiosity.

## RATING SCALE

- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Excellent
- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Very Good
- ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ Good
- ⊕ ⊕ Fair
- ⊕ Poor

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style, which helped to set a rich, surreal tone, helped create the VU sound and was later an important element of British groups like the Cure, Joy Division, and Siouxsie & the Banshees, as well as American bands like Sonic Youth.

More than just a repackaging of old VU tunes, this five-disc set contains not only the Velvet's four "proper" albums, but also twenty-five previously unreleased recordings including demos, live tracks, and outtakes. This extensive collection, which also includes comprehensive liner notes written by David Fricke, allows for a study of the role and evolution of percussion in Velvet Underground music.

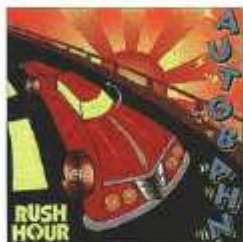
Disc one, which contains VU's earliest demos, is a quick lesson in what the band may have sounded like without Tucker's percussion. "Heroin" minus Tucker, for example, has a much different feel than the later recorded version that included her trademark hypnotic bass and tom beats. Here and elsewhere, Tucker's drumming added the depth and atmosphere that was key to the quintessential VU sound—and subsequently that of their numerous contemporaries.

**Harriet L. Schwartz**

## RUSH HOUR

*Autobahn*

(Fahrenheit FR 9504)



Larry Imbordino: dr, perc  
Tim Gaw: bs  
Kraig McCreary: gtr  
Peter Saxe: kybd  
Steve Zoloto, Steve Eisen: sx  
Mike Halpin: tbn  
Mark Ohlsen: tpt

Rush Hour keeps the fusion lively and the playing clear and decisive on this live-to-DAT session. The opening "Run Away With Me" shows off the type of engaging melody of

which they are capable, leading into a bass-driven power display called "Autobahn." There might be slow moments, like the disco-fied "Sweaty Betty" or the bland "You're My Love." But drummer Imbordino plays and programs great drum tracks, with gliding polyrhythmic work on

"Jamaica," a right-on-the-mark groove on "5 North," and exotic unpretentious playing on "Africa" standing out.

"Remember?" has an appealing Hornsby-esque rhythm track, down to the feel of the Haslip-like funk bass and partnership with sequenced percussion. This group can sound as

slick as Gino Vanelli's backup band one minute, then start tugging at the time, stretching it in unpredictable ways the next. Autobahn are definitely on the pop side of jazz, but make no mistake, they *play*.

**Robin Tolleson**

## BOOKS

### BUILDING EXCELLENCE SERIES

**Drum books by Joe Maroni**

(Mel Bay)

Mel Bay's *Building Excellence Series* includes instructional books for a variety of band and orchestra instruments, as well as piano and guitar. There are five books devoted to snare drum, each of which is reviewed below.

#### Fundamentals Of Rhythm For The Drummer \$8.95



Designed as an introductory snare drum method, *Fundamentals Of Rhythm* begins with quarter notes and rests and progresses logically through 8ths, 16ths, dotted notes, tied notes, buzz strokes, syncopation, and triplets, with lots of examples and exercises. There is no information about how to hold drumsticks and no suggested stickings, giving teachers the option of using whatever systems they prefer. But there are also no dynamic markings, accents, repeat symbols, first and second endings, or 6/8, 2/4, and 3/4 time—items found in most beginning drum methods. The main advantage of this book is in its wealth of exercises and etudes, which would benefit younger students who need a lot of repetition. It could also be used as supplemental material with a snare drum or band method that goes beyond just teaching rhythm to teach music.

#### Fundamental Principles Of Drumming \$8.95



This book is meant to follow *Fundamentals Of Rhythm* and is designed to teach the 26 standard rudiments. It includes accent studies, flams, rudimental rolls, paradiddles, drags, ratamacues, and other traditional rudiments, as well as seven rudimental solos geared for junior high students. The book does a good job teaching the material it seeks to cover, but studying only the traditional 26 rudiments will not prepare a student for a modern drum corps or marching band in which rudiments such as Swiss triplets and pata-fla-flas are common. The same approach applied to the more recent Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiments would be much more relevant to the '90s.

#### 100 Rhythm Etudes For Snare Drum \$5.95



These short (two per page) etudes were designed to "help fill the gap between the intermediate and advanced levels of snare drum playing." They are written in the rudimental style and based on the 26 traditional rudiments. Unlike many traditional rudimental solos, though, these etudes make use of a wide variety of time signatures including 2/8, 3/8, 4/8, 6/8, 2/4, 3/4, 2/2, and 3/2—but no 4/4 or cut time. Suggested metronome markings and stickings are provided. The etudes are too short to serve as audition or contest material, but would make good supplemental material for one studying rudimental drumming.

#### 50 Syncopated Solos For Snare Drum \$5.95



Syncopation is often given just a passing mention in snare drum methods, with very few exercises and examples. But a lot of American music is written in a syncopated style, so this book of etudes is especially valuable for helping students become fluent with syncopated notation, including tied notes. The etudes employ a variety of time signatures and many are written in the style of actual band charts, with first and second endings, D.S. al Fines, and Codas. Quite a few of the pages (the ones without a lot of rolls) would also work well as reading material for drumset players in the style of Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book.

#### 50 Elementary Duets For Snare Drum \$5.95



Many teachers like to use snare drum duets as a way of helping students get used to concentrating on their own part while listening to and locking in with another player. These fifty duets provide plenty of material for such a purpose, and a variety of time signatures and rhythm patterns are utilized. Although the first couple of duets are fairly simple, most require players to be at the intermediate level. Within each duet both parts are equal in difficulty, and could therefore be played by two students of similar abilities, as well as by a student and teacher.

**Rick Mattingly**



## SILAS LODER

(IRS/Primal Records 33709 2)

⊕ ⊕ ⊕ 1/2



Greg Wells: vcl, gtr, dr, bs, pno

Sure, a lot of do-it-yourselfers try this. They buy four-track recorders or small porta-studios, and lay the drums on one track, bass and guitar on two more, and vocals over the top. More often than not, these solo projects are little more than self-indulgent monstrosities.

Greg Wells blows away any preconceptions, though, with a record that not only demonstrates musical dexterity, but sounds great and also shows off a quality of song-writing you rarely find in this sort of project.

Why Wells calls this CD or himself *Silas Loder* is a mystery, but there's no secret to the rest of this disc—Wells does every-

thing (even the producing) with the song in mind. He pays such attention to dynamics, it's impossible to tell all this comes from one person.

You can squeeze *Silas Loder* snugly next to Matthew Sweet on the contemporary adult rock shelf. The songs are predominantly straight-time and mid-tempo, wrapped in a thoroughly professional studio mix. No instrument overshadows another. And though Wells isn't a mind-blower in any one particular area, a lot of lesser bands would be thrilled with this final mix.

His guitar is funky at times and unabashedly rockin' at others. The drums come off crisp and full, while several subtleties—namely, the crack of his snare and the way he manipulates his hi-hat—separate Wells from pseudo drummers. He even shows off a mild shuffle ("Lay Of The Land") and flair for punk ("Record Deal").

Regardless of whether *Silas Loder* has the muse or might to compete for commercial airtime, Wells can certainly be proud of a well-rounded achievement. Now if he can only figure out how to pull this off live....

Matt Peiken

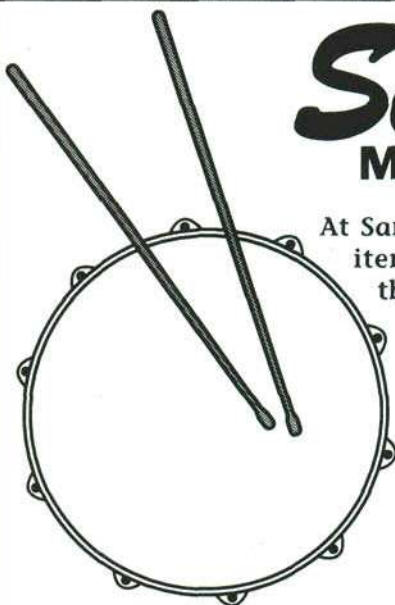
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# Steven Drozd

## Firing Up The Flaming Lips

by Ken Micallef

*The Flaming Lips subvert rock convention with sounds of dripping dementia and nauseating pop color schemes. On songs such as "Placebo Headwound," "They Punctured My Yolk," and "Pilot Can At The Queer Of God," this Oklahoma quartet combine carnival soundscapes and dissonant ear candy with madcap experimentation. Guitars detune in mid-flight, drums distort and crush the bass, and singer Wayne Coyne yelps like a sick puppy. Strangely enough, the Lips meld this garish gumbo into wonderfully melodic, hummable songs. Their most recent release, Clouds Taste Metallic, continues an eight-album tradition.*

Twenty-six-year-old Steven Drozd brought a garrulous punctua-

*tion to the Lips' 1994 LP Transmissions From The Satellite Heart, and to the EPs Providing Needles For Your Balloons and Yeah, I Know It's A Drag...Wastin' Pigs Is Still Radical. In concert, Drozd emanates a crashing, tumbling, daredevil sensibility with his sparse setup and oversized cymbals. (Imagine a gang of kids beating bass drums and concert cymbals as a crazed maestro eggs them on.) Not that Drozd isn't professional. His grand groove and witty creativity (he writes songs and plays guitar and piano) are major factors in the Flaming Lips' arsenal of mayhem. But Drozd seems to relish drumming as fun, not as an exercise in ego.*

Playing drums in his dad's polka band destined Steven Drozd to be in the Flaming Lips. In what other band could he play an oompah-oompah beat (over an Italian melody) in the guise of John Bonham?

**SD:** I grew up in Houston, Texas, and I played a lot of Czech polkas and Czech waltzes in my dad's polka band from the time I was nine. I joined his country band when I was twelve. Of course as a teenager I wanted to play rock, so I'd play in garage bands on Saturday afternoons. Then I'd work in Moose Lodges or VFW halls with my dad on Saturday nights. That way he didn't have to employ an alcoholic speed freak. He could just grab me and throw me in the truck. So I heard all the polka and country stuff from him. My brother listened to Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, while my mom was into Roberta Flack and Motown. I really wanted to play "100,000 Years" off the first KISS record. That was my big goal. So I'd practice my dad's garbage, then my brother and I would practice KISS and Aerosmith songs. I eventually played with a few crummy bands doing original material, but the Lips is my first professional rock band.

**KM:** How'd you join the Flaming Lips?

**SD:** I moved to Norman, Oklahoma with a band. Wayne was still living there in the fall of '91. The Lips had done some demos at the house where I lived. They were one of my favorite bands at the time. When their drummer quit I joined the band. Their lack of musical knowledge surprised me. You'd think they must know a lot about music to write their songs—but it's purely accidental. I was shocked that they could do this stuff.

**KM:** It must be an inspiring environment for you as a drummer.

**SD:** Definitely. I'd rather do it the Lips' way than be with a bunch of guys babbling in music-speak. This



J. Michelle Martin



band just has a different take on things.

**KM:** Speaking of a "different take," what's yours on John Bonham? You sound more like him than almost any drummer I've heard. You have the forward motion in your style, the booming sound, and the touch.

**SD:** I've always tried to emulate Bonham—even though I ignored Led Zeppelin for years. I find myself going back to those records and realizing what a bad cat he was. For example, he *never* used a straight-four bass-drum beat. There's always something that switches it up.

**KM:** You often put the bass drum on the "e's" and "uh's." The Lips seem to build songs around those grooves.

**SD:** We write together, so the guys will often suggest drum beats. I don't want to play a typical drum beat; I want to make it weird—without it being *obviously* weird. Otherwise, I come across as the "fancy rhythmist." I just want to make it something that's fun to play.

I can never relax and play the stock thing. The drums are always recorded first, and sometimes I don't even know how the song is going to sound when it's finished. We record the drums and then start piling things on. Occasionally we'll go back and re-record the entire drum track when the song is finished, so I can center on a guitar or piano track.

On *Clouds Taste Metallic* a few of the songs had been demoed, but some of them grew out of other approaches. "This Here Giraffe" came from my playing that drum beat—which I really like. Then Michael [Ivins] added the bass part, and finally the chords and the melody were added. That's a weird way to write a song, but that's just the way we do it.

**KM:** Wayne Coyne is an eccentric character with bizarre stories and ideas. Do you all spark off his creativity—or are all the guys in the band lunatics?

**SD:** Wayne is the one who will try to get the best out of people. When I'm down on myself, Wayne will say, "C'mon—let's try something." Ronald [Jones, guitar] is really a sound genius. He's not a typical guitar player at all. And Dave Fridman [Lips' producer and member of Mercury Rev] will let us try any idea—even if it doesn't work. Then he'll go back and explain *why* it doesn't work. Anything goes.

On *Clouds* more than on the last record [*Transmissions From The Satellite Heart*] we tried different drum sounds with different songs. It might be very subtle, but we still did it. "When You



J. Michelle Martin

"I'd rather do it the Lips' way than be with a bunch of guys babbling in music-speak. This band just has a different take on things."



Smile" has an entirely different drum sound than the other songs. That's my favorite. We were trying to mix "Bonzo's Montreaux" with Pizicatto Five.

**KM:** The bass drum sound on *Clouds* is not as sharp as that on *Transmissions*.

**SD:** I was hoping for more room sound. When all the guitars are distorted and feeding back it's impossible to have a good room sound for the drums. You can only shoot for punch. On *Clouds*, the arrangements are more sparse and there's less distortion. So there's more room for the drums to ring in the mix.

**KM:** Do you do a lot of experimenting in the studio?

**SD:** We'll be in the studio and someone will have an idea. We try to do variations of the same ideas. So instead of having guitars feeding back we'll have the guitars playing Glen Campbell parts. When you do that with a rock band it becomes some-

thing different.

**KM:** Are there particular songs you've contributed to?

**SD:** "Apple Of Your Eye" on *Transmissions* is my chords and melody. So is "Christmas At The Zoo," from *Clouds*. But our music involves all of us. I might come up with the chords and the melody while Wayne is writing lyrics in another room.

"Slow Nerve Action" [also from *Transmissions*] is my melody. It came from a four-track demo that I distorted the drums on. It's nice and dirty. Later I realized that the melody was a rip-off of "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head." But it's not the same key or arrangement.

Sometimes we get to the end of a song and we'll have all twenty-four tracks totally filled with stuff. Then we have to weed out what's good. Most bands build all their songs and then record everything. We build each song *after* we record it. So each song is



its own little trip.

**KM:** Does that make the drum chair for the Flaming Lips a demanding position?

**SD:** No. I love it. I have fun trying to come up with the crazy stuff.

**KM:** Speaking of "crazy stuff," on "They Punctured My Yolk" you play a reverse march. The snare drum is on 1 and the bass drum is on 2.

**SD:** That was Wayne's idea. We wanted the funeral-march sound—but switched up. We played it for people in the studio and it fooled them. But with the vocals it makes sense.

**KM:** In "Lightning Strikes The Postman" you respond to the words "supernatural delay" by emphasizing each syllable with 8th-note hi-hat accents. It cuts the feel in half.

**SD:** Again, we just wanted something different. It's like someone crashing concert cymbals. I was still trying to keep it heavy.

**KM:** Do you tune your drums differently between live and studio playing?

**SD:** It's always the same live, but in the studio we'll go for different things. On "They Punctured My Yolk" we used a completely different bass drum, and we detuned it. Then we loaded it up with reverb. On "Lightning Strikes The Postman" Ronald had me tune the kick drum to the pitch of the song. "Lightning" is tuned down to a really low D. If you listen closely you can hear the low D; it sounds like a dub or hip-hop tone.

On "Slow Nerve Action" the kick drum happened to be in the same key as the song. We thought that was a pretty weird coincidence. That's how the idea of tuning the bass drum to each song began. Dave thought of "Sweet Pea," by Tommy Roe, as an exam-

ple. The bass drum is a half-tone off and it really got on my nerves. I'd never thought about it before. But now we put a guitar tuner up to the head and let the head resonate to see how close it is to the pitch of the song. Sometimes we can get pretty close.

**KM:** Are some bass drums easier to tune than others?

**SD:** I have a bunch of drums now. I have a brownish 1945 *Radio King* set with a 24" kick, a gold sparkle 1963 Ludwig set, and my old mid-'70s Ludwigs. Then we have a 26" Yamaha *RTC* bass drum. We just try different kick drums and see what happens. The hardest to tune is the big Yamaha. The '63 Ludwig has a ringing tone with a definite pitch. I used an old Rogers drum on "They Punctured My Yolk." When it comes to snare drums, I use the '70s Ludwig drum most of the time. I use that with clear *Emperor* heads. They're loud but they don't last long.

**KM:** When the Flaming Lips opened for Porno For Pyros at Roseland in New York City recently, you had a very minimal cymbal setup. That added to the drama of the groove, which was very big.

**SD:** My live kit is pretty minimal overall. I'm using that 26" Yamaha *Rock Tour Custom* bass drum, 1963 Ludwig 13" and 16" rack and floor toms, and my 1970s Ludwig snare drum. I also use 15" hi-hats and 22" and 24" crash-ride cymbals. Those are hard to find these days, so I use whatever brand I can find.

**KM:** Who are the current drummers you like?

**SD:** I like Mac MacNeely of the Jesus Lizard. Dale Grover of the Melvins used to be my idol. He hits the drums so hard. He actually comes off the stool when he hits.

Keith Moon is also a big favorite of mine. I just bought a video of old Who clips. The recording is distorted 'cause the band is so loud in the club and Keith is just killing the drums. Keith would completely break up the beat in the middle of the verse. But it would sound natural, not weird or out of place.

**KM:** The Lips recently returned from a European tour with the Red Hot Chili Peppers. What was that like?

**SD:** The crowds didn't take too kindly to us in places. We were too weird. They wanted to hear the Chili Pepper hits. And, unfortunately, we also had to play on rented equipment. I was uncomfortable, and I played some of my worst shows in Europe. I think Chad Smith thought I was a putz.

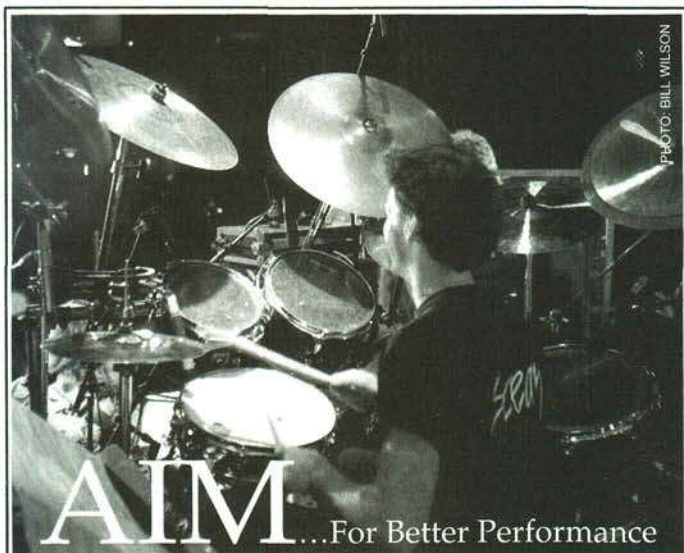
**KM:** What did you think of Chad?

**SD:** Chad is a really good drummer. He's technically good without being fancy. He can beat the crap out of the drums and do a good fill without sounding like he's trying to be some badass.

One funny thing that happened on the tour came when I had the pleasure of playing with [Chili Peppers guitarist] Dave Navarro in a backstage rehearsal room. We blew through ten Jane's Addiction tunes and Dave said, "How'd you know all those songs?" I said that Jane's was my favorite band for years. Then I asked him how he knew all those songs. He looked at me like I was an idiot and said, "Well, I was *in* the band."

**KM:** Oops!

**SD:** Yeah. But in general, playing and touring with the Lips has been great. I get to do things that few—if any—drummers get to do. For example, we played Lollapalooza with Nick Cave—doing "What A Wonderful World." It was so surreal. He's an idol of mine. There I was, playing drums and looking at Nick Cave's butt. I thought to myself, "This is pretty cool."



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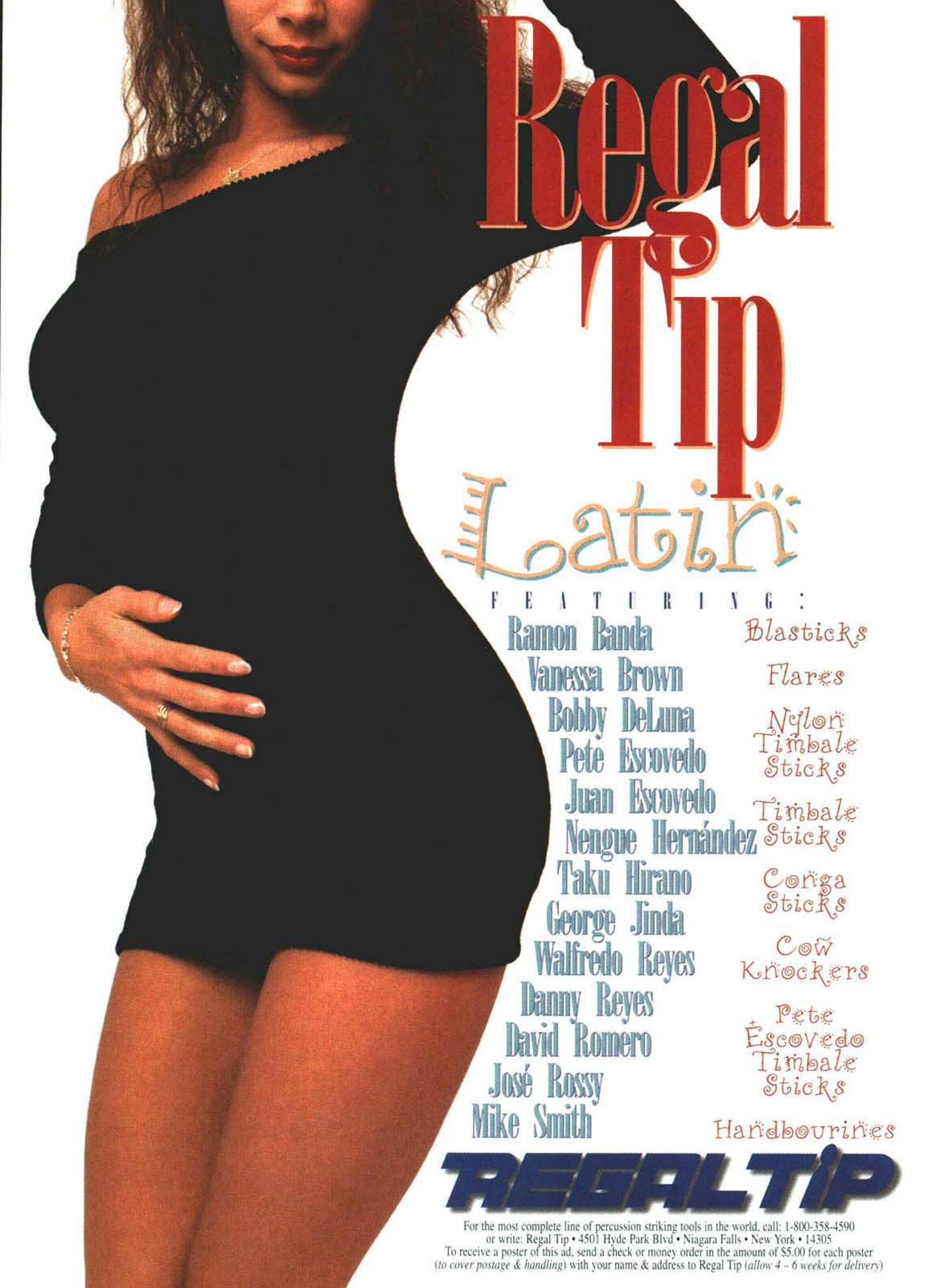
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## Rich Scannella

Trenton, New Jersey's Rich Scannella first studied music with his father—a Juilliard graduate. Rich's professional career began in his father's jazz, Dixieland, and Italian music bands—along with performing in local youth orchestras. But his ambition was to tour, so after studying privately with Tony DeNicola and at Drummer's Collective in New York, Rich felt ready to "hit the road." At the tender age of twenty he became involved in backing stars on the "oldies circuit," including Gary "U.S." Bonds, the Tokens, the Marvelettes, and Bobby Lewis.

Now twenty-six and with eighteen years of drumming experience under his belt, Rich performs four to six nights per week with Strange As Angels, a popular band on the Philadelphia scene. The group combines elements of rock, jazz, and alternative music to create an original sound, and they take their shows to clubs in Pennsylvania, the Jersey shore, Delaware, and Maryland. The group has a CD currently awaiting release.

Rich's varied drumming influences—including Buddy Rich, Kenny Aronoff, Jo Jones, Elvin Jones, Anton Fig, Steve Jordan, and Simon Phillips—help him to approach the multiplicity of styles that go into SAA's music. He also free-lances with other groups in his "spare time." Obviously, musical variety is important to Rich, which explains why he says his "ultimate goal" is "to do studio work full time, so I can have a chance to play all styles of music." He currently plays a four-piece Tama *Artstar II* kit and Sabian cymbals.



## John Scalici

Three years ago thirty-year-old John Scalici of Birmingham, Alabama underwent a major lifestyle change. "I've played drums since the age of fourteen," John says. "But I attribute every ounce of my success—however great or small—to getting sober in 1993. It was then that I realized the value of consistent, intense study and practicing. I amassed a library of music and instructional videos. I became a sponge and absorbed all that I could—especially concepts like simplicity, groove, and feel."

Those concepts have since stood John in good stead with his busy blues trio, Gravy. The band plays an average of twenty dates per month, touring the Southeast. They've opened for such artists as Jimmie Vaughan, Robert Cray, and Warren Haynes, and they recently released their first recording, enti-



tled *From The Hip*.

With influences like Kenny Aronoff, Chris Layton, Levon Helm, and Jim Keltner, it isn't surprising that John's playing on Gravy's CD features solid, intense grooves punctuated by creative and powerful fills that give the music drive and character. To accomplish that style of playing John keeps his equipment simple: A four-piece kit consisting of Pearl *Masters Custom* bass and toms and a 4" Drum Workshop solid-wood snare, Zildjian cymbals, and a combination of Pearl and DW hardware.

"I am living proof that consistent, hard work pays off," says John. "My goal is to be doing what I'm doing now in ten years or more. I want to become a better drummer, write some good lyrics, and make an honest living."

## Paul Albrecht

Paul Albrecht, a thirty-nine-year old native of Philadelphia, divides his time between a busy performing schedule and an equally busy teaching practice. On the performance side, he plays jazz with his own trio and with the Paul Colombo Jazz Group, does club dates with the Paul Roberts Ensemble, and free-lances. "My favorite music



is jazz," says Paul, "but I've been playing professionally for over twenty years, so I've performed virtually every style—and I still do. My influences range from Ringo, Mitch Mitchell, Ginger Baker, and all the Motown drummers to Art Blakey, Max Roach, Tony Williams, Elvin Jones, and Jack DeJohnette. I'm most excited by situations where the music depends on spontaneous group interaction, emotion, and improvisation."

As a teacher, Paul shares his experience and expertise with over forty students per week at three different music stores and at home. He has also contributed arti-

cles to *Modern Drummer* (Dec. '93) and to *Drum Rolls* (a Philly-area drumming newsletter).

Paul's demo tape reveals a versatile style that incorporates both excellent technique and a solid grasp of what's appropriate for the material he's performing. He plays a Yamaha *Maple Custom* kit equipped with Yamaha hardware and "older American-made K Zildjian cymbals." According to Paul, his goals are "to continue earning a living as a musician, to broaden and refine my musical concepts, technique, and personality, and to increase my teaching and performing opportunities."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for nor credited.) The bio sketch

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you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to On The Move, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.





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# The Drummer's Studio Survival Guide: Part 12

## Studio Drumming Round Table

by Mark Parsons

In putting this series together, we talked to a number of prominent drummers, and we've whetted your appetite with short quotes from those interviews sprinkled throughout the series. Well, now it's time for the whole enchilada.

Those drummers who participated are all household names in the drumming community. They need no introduction. So without further ado, let's get the inside scoop on playing in the studio from Kenny Aronoff, Gregg Bissonette, Jim Keltner, Rod Morgenstein, Simon Phillips, and J.R. Robinson.

**MP:** What do you discuss with the engineer prior to a session in order to ensure a good drum sound?

**Robinson:** As the drummer, I usually have to show up thirty minutes to an hour before the session downbeat. The engineer will usually show up about the same time. If I don't know the artist or what the music is, I'll ask the engineer what we're doing and what kind of music we're cutting.

Fortunately, I've been busy enough over the years that 80% of the time the engineer is someone I've worked with before. He knows me, I know him, and I know how he's going to mike the drums and what selection of mic's he's going to use. I'll immediately offer my suggestions on microphones. I'm an Audio-Technica artist, so I promote certain A.T. mic's, including the *ATM-25* bass drum mic'. If he hasn't used that mic' I'll say, "Would you be willing to try this? It's the greatest mic' you're ever going to use on the bass drum." And he'll say, "Sure, I'll try it."

**Phillips:** It all depends on the guy. We usually say hello, then he sees the drumkit and takes a step back. [laughs] He sees that I've already installed a lot of microphones on it, and what happens is he usually asks *me* questions. If he doesn't know the mic's he'll say, "Hey, what are these? Do they need phantom power or not?" He might ask, "Where on earth am I going to put the snare drum mic'?" We just sort of chat. He'll say,

"What do you normally have on the snare drum?" I'll say an *SM57* and he'll say, "Good, it so happens I have one here in my hand"—that sort of thing.

Although it rarely happens, in some studios I've been to the kit will be miked up with different mic's. For example, they might have Neumann *U87s* on each tom-tom. The engineer usually says, "You know, I saw your mic's but I'd really like to use these." And I'll say, "Great!" Six *U87s* on my toms—fine! But usually we're both experienced enough that not much really gets said—because it's all pretty obvious.

The only other thing I would talk to the engineer about is how to pan the kit, because that is something a little bit different. The first thing I ask the engineer is whether he likes to "look at the kit" or "sit behind the kit." In other words, when you're panning from the console, do you like to have the hi-hat coming out of your right speaker like you're looking at the kit, or do you like to have the hi-hat coming out of your left channel? Nine times out of ten, thankfully, most engineers like to look at the kit. That's the way I like it when I engineer. Although I play the kit, when I'm listening in context, I like to look at a kit. I rarely find an engineer who wants to do it the other way around.

Next I tell him I like to pan the kit a certain way because I feel it offers the best spatial area for the kit to sit in. The first four rack toms get panned from hard right to hard left. Let's say hard right is 4:00, then #2 would be 2:00, #3 would be 10:00, and #4 would be 8:00. Tom-tom #5 would be in between tom-toms #1 and #2, and tom-tom #6 would be somewhere around the middle—but not quite central. The gong drum goes in between #3 and #4 so you get a bit of movement. Then the *Octobans* go the opposite way: #1 is left, going

to #4 on the right. The overheads are panned hard left to right, with the hi-hats on a separate track, panned in a bit. And that's really all we talk about. After that I just hope he doesn't take too long and doesn't do too much.

**Morgenstein:** Sometimes a particular engineer or producer is brought in—either through the suggestion of the record label or



J.R. Robinson

Neil Zlozower



Simon Phillips

Rick Malkin



because they were hot at the time and you wanted to work with them. In those cases it's almost as if you have to defer to them, because *they* don't really *need* to be there. If you hit them with "This is the way I do it man, let's get it straight," [laughs] they'll say, "Well, then I guess you really don't need me to be here, 'cause I have my own way of doing things."

I've always taken the approach that playing the instrument is my strong point.

So although I have my opinions, I assume that a producer or an engineer is a lot more qualified in the area of making things sound good—based on their past performance. But if I were doing my *own* thing, I would try to work with someone who is into taking the time to make the drumset—as it sits there in the middle of the room—sound as natural and as good as it can without enhancing it or replacing it with samples. You can *always* sweeten the acoustic sound of the kit by using whatever effects you have in the studio; there's a never-ending supply of reverbs, noise gates, harmonizers, and things.

**Keltner:** Believe it or not, I usually don't do *any* talking to the engineer, since it's a producer's medium. The producer and the artist—depending who the artist is and how much involvement he or she has—generally have an idea of what they want when they call me. So I'll let the engineer do his thing. But I may bring in another piece of gear—something to make the drums sound a little funny or a different instrument to hang on the kit. When I do that I just generally tell the engineer what it's going to be and let him choose and place the microphone. I'm not knowledgeable enough about microphones to tell the engineer to use this or do that.

I've been fortunate over the years to work with great engineers—though I do wish that more engineers would be more adventurous. In my field I do such mainstream stuff that there isn't as much adventure as I would like. People are trying to be competitive and don't necessarily want to try new things. Actually, as I hear myself saying that, I think about all the times I go to a session where people will say, "Listen, what can we do *different* this time?" So there's at least a lot of *talk* of it. [laughs] Whether it actually happens or not is another story.

The thing I run into all the time is that although I purposefully screw around with my drums just to get a different kind of sound, when I hear the record after the mixing and mastering is done, they've made me sound just like everybody else anyway.



Rod Morgenstein



Kenny Aronoff



Jim Keltner



Gregg Bissonette

[laughs] I don't know what it is—it's a conspiracy in the music world. There are more followers than there are leaders. But it's out of your hands unless it's your project.

**Aronoff:** My experience with engineers varies. Usually they're very, very cool, and they'll let me set my drums up the way I want—whatever I need to get my sound. What happens is usually I ask *them*: "Do you mind if I keep a front head on the bass drum?" or "Do you want the bass drum to be muffled tight?" Personally I like to use a front head with a small hole and minimal muffling so I get a little bit of ambience. That way the drum doesn't sound like a cardboard box. The other thing I'll ask is: "Do you mind if I use 18" crash cymbals?" Sometimes if they have a lot of room mic's to make the drums sound big, the

cymbals will be too aggressive. Other than that they encourage me to do my thing.

**Bissonette:** The first thing that I like to do is break the ice by saying, politely, "I'm really looking forward to working with you, and I'm sure that we both share the same opinions on a good drum sound." I like to hear as much nice low end on all the drums as possible—but as much high-end slap and crack as possible, too, because I don't like drums that sound muddy and murky. I really like

a nice, wide-open tone, but one that's real fat and really hits you in the chest. When it has that attack *and* it has that fat low end, to me it's really happening.

While I'm setting up and tuning my drums and we're talking, I'll mention the kind of heads I use and the fact that I have RIMS on my drums. I'll talk about my new Slingerland kit and how I like to get a nice attack and a nice, warm, open tone, and how I don't like to use any tape. I do put a little padding in the bass drum, but basically I like to have the drums really wide-open and *ringing*—not *obnoxious* ringing, just nice, fat sustain. And they'll say, "Oh yeah, man, I'm with you!"

Then I bring up the next thing in the most politically correct way of doing it. I'll say, "You know, if there's any way that all the 16th ghost notes—the little grace notes—can come out...." I'm not a big fan of gating, because when you gate the drums all the subtle little 16th-note patterns get lost. So I like to ask that they don't even gate the drums if at all possible. I like to have the drums wide open and natural, without tons of reverb and other effects. I like to hear a good ambient sound from the drums in the room.

Rick Malkin

Lissa Wales



One of the other key things is to make sure that while you're tuning and the engineer is placing the drum mic's, you ask him or her to listen to what your drums sound like in the room. More than anything what I want the engineer to do is make the drums sound true-to-life. A *good* engineer will usually sit and listen. And while the engineer is listening, instead of just playing a bunch of licks or trying to impress somebody, I like to just play real solid time, hitting all the drums and all the cymbals.

I'd get real upset if an engineer came right in and said, "I really need to hear a drummer who hits right in the middle of the snare with no rim shots," so I think I'd be offended if I was an engineer and a guy said, "Hey look, man, before we even get started, let me set something straight here. I need my drums to sound like *this*...." You've got to work together. Part of working in the studio is getting along with other people and making everybody feel comfortable.

**MP:** Are there certain mic's you like to use on your drums because of the way they sound?

**Aronoff:** The mic's I want on my drums are the mic's that make me sound good. [laughs] Mic's that sound great in one room can sound completely different in another room. The whole thing about mic's is the engineer and what he does with them. Contributing factors in the way a mic's sounds are the outboard gear, the way the mic' is EQ'd, and the room.

I'm still a big fan of the Shure SM57 on the snare. On the bass drum I tend to like two mic's: I like a mic' with a lot of aggression, like the Sennheiser 427. But it's a little bright, so we have to put another mic' in there to get a meatier sound—maybe an old tube mic' or occasionally the AKG D12-E. On the toms I use the 427, the Shure 57, the AKG C408 clip-ons, and the Shure SM98s.

**Bissonette:** I've heard guys walk in and say, "Man, you've got to put Sennheiser 421s on all my toms, a 57 on my snare, and I want to use that PZM mic' on my bass drum with a D12...." What right do you have doing that? It's like them telling you what kind of sticks to use. If they can get a great sound with all 57s on the drums, at least give them a chance. If the sound isn't happening, then you might make some suggestions. But the last thing anybody wants is to be *told* what to do.

Having said that, I *do* have some personal favorites. On toms I really like the Sennheiser 421s, and for the bass drum I've had good luck with the same, or an AKG 71772. I also like the Shure SM91 on the bass drum. On the snare, just a 57. For overheads I like the AKG 414s a lot.

**Keltner:** I use a microphone in my bass drum that I really believe is fantastic—an AKG D112. A lot of guys are using it now. I have both heads on my bass drum, so what they'll do is take a Neumann U47 or something and put it on the outside.

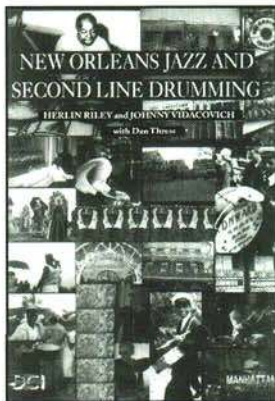
**Phillips:** I supply the kit with bass drum mic's because the bass drums have front heads on. The mic's are already inside and wired up. I'm using the AKG D12s—the older ones. On the toms I use Electro-Voice ND-308s. I supply those because most studios don't have six identical mic's with the same age and same usage on them, so they might sound a bit different. But as for all the other mic's, I like SM57s for the

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# Studio Vocabulary Brush-Up

In the discussion presented in this article, our panel of studio drummers employ a variety of technical terms. All of those terms have been explained at length in previous installments of the "Studio

Survival Guide" series (and you should refer back to those articles if you need detailed information). But in the meantime, here's a quick refresher course on studio terminology.

**Compression**—Reducing the overall dynamic range of a signal by applying a device (a compressor) that lowers the peaks in the signal. Judicious use can enhance ("fatten") a drum sound.

**EQ**—Equalization. The amplification or reduction of *select* frequencies. Bass and treble controls on a stereo are a simple form of EQ.

**Gating**—Using a noise gate to eliminate the quieter parts of a signal by "gating out" or shutting off the signal once the level falls below a predetermined threshold. Sometimes used on drum mic's to eliminate leakage from other sound sources. Overuse can hurt drum tracks by unnecessarily eliminating quiet (but musically important) notes.

**Headroom**—The ability of a device to handle signals above its nominal operating level without distortion. Adequate headroom is especially important when dealing

with signals having a wide dynamic range, such as drums.

**Panning**—Placing a sound in a certain spot within the stereo field. Panning something hard left, for example, means placing it so it only originates from the left speaker in a stereo mix.

**Phantom Power**—A low-voltage D.C. power source (usually 48 volts) supplied by a mixer or outboard device to power condenser microphones. The power is supplied via the mic' cable itself yet is transparent to the audio signal coming from the mic', hence the name.

**Plate**—A type of electro-mechanical reverb using transducers mounted on large metal plates suspended by springs. Also refers to programs on modern digital reverbs that attempt to emulate the sound of a plate reverb.

**Pre-Delay**—In digital reverbs, a short delay between the sound source and the onset of reverberation. Emulates the short (but audible) pause you hear in a large room between the time you make a sound and the time you hear the sound reflected back to you.

**Reverb**—Reverberation. A wash of diffuse sound reflections, as opposed to discreet echoes. (If you said "Hello," an echo would reply "Hello...hello... hello..." while a reverb would give you "Helloooooooooo...") Also refers to any device—mechanical, analog, or digital—that artificially generates reverberation.

**Transients**—The short, sharp peaks of a percussive waveform, usually occurring during the beginning or "attack" portion of a sound. Accurate reproduction of transients is essential to faithfully capturing drum sounds.

snare drums—everybody's got those. Everybody's got some condenser mic's for the hi-hats and the overheads, and pretty much everybody has an *M88* or an *RE20* or a *U47*. So I don't bother about those mic's.

**Robinson:** I've already mentioned that I endorse the Audio-Technica *ATM-25* bass drum mic'. On the snare drum I use the old standby Shure 57 and maybe an AKG 452 on the bottom. On the hi-hat, usually it's a 452 or a Neumann *KM84*. But you know, I've

been in situations in those little home studios where all they have are 57s, and I'll tell you what: You can put a Shure 57 on *anything* and EQ it and it'll sound good. They're very dependable microphones for getting sounds quickly.

For overhead mic's I really like the AKG *C12s*. If God ever made a microphone it was this one. [laughs] If you just put them over the kit, you get a beautiful warm sound. The AKG *414* is also a great overhead mic'.

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**MP:** What about signal processing? Are there certain things you like to hear on your drums—or maybe things you'd like to avoid?

**Aronoff:** I'll do sessions where the engineer uses minimal EQ, minimal effects, no gates, and no compression—and it sounds phenomenal. It's all about mic' placement. I like that approach if you can make it sound good. But then there are other engineers who add a bunch of stuff to it and it sounds great, too.

The engineer is as important to the whole process as the drummer is. A drummer gets his sound from the way he tunes, the way he hits, what equipment he uses—his whole approach. It's the same thing for an engineer. You can give another drummer and engineer the same gear and it would sound completely different.

**Bissonette:** One thing that bugs me, EQ-wise, is if the bass drum doesn't have a nice high-end slap on it. Some guys like the bass drum to be sort of flat, but I really enjoy hearing a little bit of that "click" sound on the bass drum. So I often end up asking the engineer, "Is there any way we could put a little more of the click sound in

there?"—not overdone, just enough so you can tell what the bass drum's doing.

If I'm going to use reverb, I like to have a large hall reverb—a nice, ambient room sound. The AMS is great for that, and so is the Publison and the Lexicon 224.

**Keltner:** I prefer to have no gates on my tom-toms. That's one thing that I really can't stand to hear. In fact, I hate gates on anything. I hate the *concept* of a gate: shutting down the instrument. It's so stupid.

**Morgenstein:** It goes back to what I was saying before: I'll defer to the person who's in charge of making the sound. I totally understand the importance of gates, and I don't really mind them on tom-toms. However, there can absolutely be no gate on the snare drum, because I'm one of those ghost-stroke kind of players. When a gate is put on a snare drum, all you're going to hear is the 2 and 4, and that totally changes everything you're doing.

**Phillips:** These days, most engineers in England and America don't use gates to record. Unfortunately, in Japan and Europe that's the first thing they put in. They even start getting the drum sound with the inserts switched in. It's ridiculous! I tell

them to just disconnect all the gates. If they look at me with astonishment I just go 'round the back and pull the inserts. Thankfully over here most people have passed that stage; it was basically a '70s thing. Absolutely no gates when tracking—leave that to when you mix. And when I mix I probably only use gates on the echo sends.

With some engineers, I just hit the drums, they just put the faders up, and we've got a sound. Others are just not used to that type of process. Usually what happens is they've only got maybe five faders up and they aren't happy with the way the sound is developing. So I say to them, "Well, look, it's like a grand piano. You have to have everything open before it sounds like anything. You can't just have the first two mic's open and the rest closed." Once they get that concept they put everything up—and then they go, "Ahhh, I see. So *that's* what a drumkit sounds like."

Problems are very rare. Most engineers have good ears and they know what they're doing. It's only very occasionally that we come unstuck—and there are two reasons

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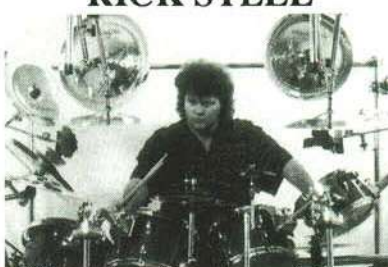
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for that. One: very bad acoustics. If the thing sounds bad in the room to start with, there's really not a lot you can do. Two: a cheap mixing board that doesn't have good headroom and doesn't have any NEVE or API channels to put high transient things like a snare drum and a bass drum through. If you can't get good, expensive electronics that have a lot of headroom before they distort, then you're going to end up with a cheap sound. It just basically compresses and distorts. You don't really hear the distortion, you just don't hear good sound. Tom-toms and overheads are pretty forgiving, but kick and snare have lots of transients, and if you put them through a cheap board it's not going to sound good.

**Robinson:** I hate gates. I was doing a date that had an English engineer. I usually love English engineers, but I think this guy should've been locked up. He was spending so much time on the tom-toms that I thought, "This son of a bitch is gating," and I could also hear it being gated in the phones. I said, "Excuse me, why are you gating?" and he said, [affects British accent] "Oh, it'll be a great sound. Trust me!" I said, "I hate gates. Why don't you get the overall sound of the drumset together, add your overheads, and then we'll use less room, no room, some sort of reverb, or no reverb. Why do you need to gate?" The reason guys like him gate is because they can't get a decent bass drum sound or snare drum sound on their own naturally.

There is sometimes an advantage to gating, depending on the material you're

going to play. I don't like gating bass drums, but I have to admit that in triggering situations it can be helpful on toms or snares. As for reverbs, I like short, bright plates; I don't really like gated reverbs. I like short plates with no pre-delay. If I hear pre-delay it throws off my internal clock

slightly.

*Next month we'll finish up our discussion with these drummers, plus we'll pick up some tips from a couple offfolks who make their living on the other side of the glass.*



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*Shown at left: DW's 9700 Cymbal Stands, 9500 Snare Stand, 9934 Cymbal/Tom Stands and 9100 Drum Throne.*

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# The Best Of Both Worlds.



# Reading Between The lines Of Drum Book Publishing: Part 1

by Rich Watson

Every day, drummers like Smitty Smith, Terry Bozzio, Trilok Gurtu—and you!—replenish and slightly change the vast pool of musical ideas into which we all dip for inspiration. Listening to great players is one way to explore drumming's infinite possibilities. Another, more deliberate and goal-oriented way is the assimilation of techniques, concepts, insights, and observations presented in books. Because books often focus on specific areas of interest or levels of proficiency, they can map out a relatively short, straight path to improving particular aspects of our playing and our knowledge of music. By virtue of their potentially broad sphere of influence, they can also provide their authors a way to make a meaningful—and possibly lucrative—contribution to the drumming community. In this two-part series we'll examine what music book publishers and the book-buying public are looking for, the services that publishers offer, and the benefits and challenges of self-publishing. Read on, and if the spirit moves you—*write on!*

## Fast Forward

Television, *Instant Breakfast*, *Minute Rice*, and MTV. Life in the '90s has made us demand, as the old joke goes, "a microwave fireplace that lets you spend a quiet evening by the fire in just ten minutes." Many young drummers in particular shun the methodical, laborious yesteryear approach of rudiments-till-you drop, preferring instead to cop licks off CDs and videos. And as public funds for music education and school bands disappear, more kids who (for various reasons) don't have access to private lessons become students of their TVs and stereos by default—and their study habits are shaped accordingly.

This trend challenges music book authors and publishers to provide material that is instantly stimulating and that can be learned quickly and then immediately applied to real-life performance situations—but without forsaking the solid pedagogical foundation essential for serious long-range development. Balancing what's attractive and what's good for the student "is the decision that publishers face every day," says Dave Black, Alfred Publishing Company's director of instrumental music, director of the percussion division, and acquisition editor of the percussion department. Fortunately, ingenious authors and publishers can satisfy both goals.

One solution is to modernize the media. Black points out that many new drum methods utilize play-along audio and video tapes. "Playing to a hip track makes learning much more fun," he says. This not only satisfies New World expectations for multi-sensory stimulation, it has been proven to enhance comprehension and help smooth the transition from playing in the practice room to playing with a band. Publishers are also exploring studying with MIDI computer applications and interactive CD ROM.

More importantly, the material's content has become significantly more practical. Manhattan Music's Rob Wallis states, "Drummers isolate themselves—getting hung up on woodshedding licks, complex charts and rhythms, and independence exercises. But they don't follow through to the next step—the crucial one—which is making it comfortable in their musical vocabulary and then





applying it musically. I always make sure that the end result of whatever they're shedding is something they can use when they're out there gigging."

Rick Latham, TV and film session player and author of the seminal *Advanced Funk Studies*, adds that part of what makes a book practical is its ability to inspire students to adapt the material and get them to develop their own sound. "A book should help students capture the idiomatic rhythms and patterns," he says, "but then make them think about them conceptually so they can be treated individually. Technique is not an end in itself, nor is learning tough licks by rote. Explaining how things work *musically* is what's needed."

The diversity of available drum books is partly due to the fact that authors' definitions of "practical" are often based upon their own experiences in learning, playing, and teaching. Russ Miller explains that the Latin section of his self-published *Drumset Crash Course* is so large because "it's such a big question mark among so many players, and it represented such a big problem in my professional life."

"I grew up in Ohio," he says. "There's not a lot of Latin music in Ohio. When I came to Miami, I was hyper-exposed to it, and

"Technique is not an end in itself, nor is learning tough licks by rote. Explaining how things work *musically* is what's needed."



No longer composed of page after page of exercises, they frequently employ text that explains how patterns should be played, how they can be practically applied, and even why they are relevant. Audio tape and CD supplements, now commonplace, also help by supplying a musical context for the written rhythms, and by conveying musical nuances that can't be—or generally aren't—notated.

Many contemporary music books suggest other books and videos for further study, and some offer discographies of recordings that demonstrate presented musical styles. The discographies in particular help to ground lesson material in the real world of performed music.

found that if you can't competently play these rhythms, you won't be able to work. I needed practical, solid information that would allow me to compete in this market."

While a few landmark technique-building books (such as Ted Reed's *Syncopation*, George Lawrence Stone's *Stick Control* and *Accents And Rebounds*, and Jim Chapin's *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*) still sell very well, most new releases present material in a more conceptual manner.

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efit your fellow players—and perhaps haul in a nice chunk of change in the bargain—requires having something new to say. But lest we be immediately daunted, realize that "new" doesn't mean "never before conceived by humankind." It can mean "unfamiliar to a substantial segment of potential book buyers." A good example of this is *West African Rhythms For The Drumset*, a book and CD set by Royal Hartigan and Dan Thress. The style is, of course, already known and played in West Africa. But to the vast majority of players outside of that region, it is very "new" indeed. Other books teach musical styles that are familiar to the ear, but that have been largely neglected by authors, such as Brian Pullen's excellent *Contemporary Country Styles For The Drummer And Bassist*.

"New" can also mean new ways to look at drumming that jog us from creativity-numbing preconceptions, or that disintegrate mental blocks to difficult techniques or concepts. Mark Hamon's *New Directions Around The Drums*, for example, presents fill patterns as shapes, and Pete Magadini's *Understanding Polyrhythms* helps explode some of the mystery of that commonly baffling topic. Steve Houghton and Tom Warrington probe the subtle yet critical musical interaction between bass and drums, providing charts and tips for both instruments in *Essential Styles For The Drummer And Bassist*.

And finally, drum methods that address multiple techniques, concepts, or musical styles can offer new "mixes" of the material they cover, both in terms of range and the amount of detail devoted to each. The aforementioned *Drumset Crash Course* is a fine entry in this category.

Publishers continue to look for exceptional books on fundamentals and basic techniques—even though in some cases those fields may have already been extensively plowed. Manhattan Music's co-president, Rob Wallis (who, along with Paul Siegel, founded the Drummer's Collective school in New York), says that on the one hand, "It's hard to convince drum teachers to change their programs from Ted Reed, *Stick Control*, and the Chapin book," and refers to these books as "the Bibles of drumming." Still, Manhattan Music continues to look for ways to update and modernize traditional methods and teaching systems. As an example, Wallis specifically cites Michael Lauren's *Understanding Rhythms*, which was intended to present traditional technique-building exercises in a more practical order.

Similarly, John Cerullo, Hal Leonard Corporation's vice president of product development, states, "At Hal Leonard we're not afraid of creating product in areas that might already have been done—even books that are considered 'gospel.' You can put a new spin on it that might be more appropriate for today's player."

Rick Mattingly, *Modern Drummer* contributing writer who recently joined Hal Leonard's product development team, illustrates Cerullo's point: "In many ways the material in Joe Morello's *Master Studies* is similar to material in *Stick Control* and *Accents And Rebounds*, but it's written from a different perspective," he says. "*Stick Control* and *Accents And Rebounds* were classical- and rudimental-oriented, whereas Morello's book swings. And it has proven to be a very good seller; there was a need for it."

In this sense, "new" actually means "updated for the needs of today's drummers." "Rock styles have changed dramatically over the years," says Dave Black, "so if you write a rock book it should reflect the beats of the '80s and '90s." Mattingly points out, "Twenty years ago drumset players could develop coordination with the Chapin book. Today there are a lot of people who never need to play a jazz rhythm. That's why a book like *The New Breed*, which came out in the mid-'80s, has met with great success."

Similarly, a musical style's presence on the airwaves can alter the degree of detail needed in books. Writing out some details of a current pop music style may be redundant, but styles whose exposure has waned might require more explicit instruction. Russ Miller illustrates this point by describing one of his first gigs in Ohio with bass player Jeff Halsey—whom he credits with teaching him how to play jazz. "I was playing the coolest patterns I'd learned from the Chapin book the previous week. Jeff turned around to me and said, 'Whatever you're doing, stop doing it. Don't play anything but quarter notes for the rest of the gig.' I was devastated." Miller later told this story to Jim Chapin, who laughed about it, explaining what would have been obvious to players in the '40s, '50s, and '60s: that his book was for facility-building, not a literal representation of how jazz is to be played.

And just as not even the "classics" are sacred, not even the most basic techniques and concepts are chiseled in stone. "People might think there's nothing more traditional than the rudiments," says Rick Mattingly. "But the rudiments that are played in drum corps in the '90s are far removed from the simple twenty-six rudiments found in the Haskell Harr book. Go check out a modern drum corps. You can't take *anything* for granted."

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## Microscope Vs. Wide-Angle Lens

All method books are largely defined by two major factors: *scope* and *depth*. These factors are almost always interrelated and inversely proportional. That is, books with a very broad scope covering multiple playing styles, concepts, or techniques don't provide as much detail or background as do books that focus on more narrowly defined areas. On the other hand, overview methods tend to highlight conceptual connections between styles. This can be especially helpful to beginning and intermediate players who might not grasp techniques or concepts presented in just one context, and to players at any level who are unfamiliar with one or more musical genres. As we'll see, the market has room for both.

Rick Latham's *Advanced Funk Studies*, a highly specific work, made an enormous impact. But the author followed it with the broader *Contemporary Drumset Technique*. "The first book was just a compilation of licks, and at the time that was needed," notes Latham (who between sessions and work on a solo album is creating a groove loop CD called *Rick Latham's Groove Time*). "The second book expounds more on the concept of linear playing, the hows and whys of it." Both books have been very successful.

Rob Wallis says Manhattan Publishing is looking for definitive works on individual styles, such as John Riley's book on bop drumming. "I want to find our topic and nail it to the wall and make sure that readers are getting an enormous amount of information." Perhaps epitomizing the concept of drum method depth, Manhattan Music's books on Afro-Cuban rhythms even include descriptions of the culture and history and maps of the nations whose musical styles are being presented. "We try to design each book and video to appeal to different levels of playing development," says Wallis. "When you first look at it, maybe you grasp twenty or thirty percent of it. Then a few months down the road, something else sparkles. To me, if we can build that kind of depth into a product, we've really done a good job, and the author has done a good job of laying out the material."

Rick Latham agrees. "The mark of a great book is that the student never masters it to the point of not needing it any longer." Citing *Stick Control* as a book of timeless depth, he adds, "We all carry those around in our briefcases."

Russ Miller, who has a hot new CD and a calendar full of gigs and clinics for Yamaha and Zildjian, respects specialty books (and plans to write several that will expand the major topics in *Crash Course*), but has found in his teaching that some players can be intimidated by copious detail on an unfamiliar style or technique. There were times during his formative years, he says, "when I just wanted to get the general idea of something and get on with it." To Miller, who sees drum study as a life-long endeavor, "getting on with it" meant not waiting until he was a master of a particular area of drumming before beginning to implement its concepts *on the gig*. "My rule of thumb is, as a professional musician, you have to be able to do everything. It's hard enough to get the phone to ring, let alone to have to turn things down due to ignorance of a particular musical style."

Today's culture of fast cuts and sound bites has created a legitimate need for general books that might have been denounced twenty years ago. First, the shotgun marketing theory: The number of major topics in a book gives it an equal number of chances to interest players who don't have a particular area of study in mind;

the specialty book only has one such chance. Second, overview books require a smaller commitment of time for the student to become acquainted with numerous styles. (To some this may seem to be pandering to laziness and superficial learning, but the alternative may be that some players ignore non-favorite styles entirely.) And finally, attempting to become well-rounded with specialty books (many with audio or video supplements and prices of \$40 or more) can exceed the financial resources of many young players.

Beneath the surface, these two approaches represent different roads to the same destination. In the same way that a very specific beginning snare drum method will inspire the student to progress to "Book II," a well-conceived general drum method will tantalize the student to explore many styles in greater depth—usually with other, more focused method books. Extreme cases of either approach are doomed to fail. Of books that cover many topics superficially, Rick Mattingly says, "While all the material might be valid, ultimately the book doesn't add up to anything." The converse, which he describes as "taking an isolated topic and doing it to death, such as '2,000 paradiddles around the drumset'" yields equally unusable, *un-musical* results.

In this article we've discussed the elements necessary for the creation of a contemporary drum book. Next time, we'll consider how to get that book out to the drumming public. The name of that game is "publishing," and we'll examine all the options. See you then!



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# Tony Williams: Part 2

by Mark Griffith

Last month we talked about the pre-1968 Tony Williams—before the bright yellow Gretsch drums and the big cymbals. It wasn't until after Tony left Miles Davis's band that the drums, the cymbals, and the reputation got even bigger.

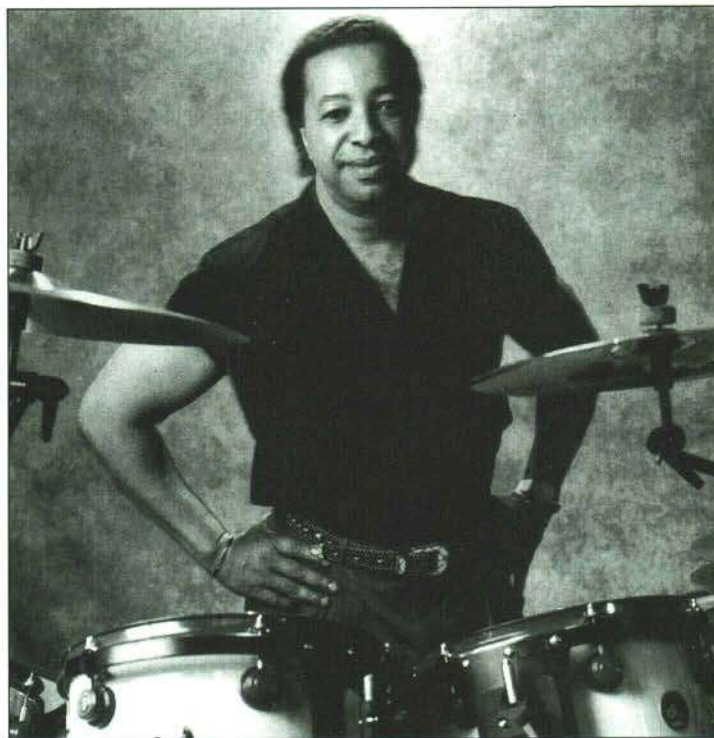
For Tony's third recording as a leader he chose a new direction. He would now lead an organ trio, but he wouldn't play "typical" organ trio music. The band was the Tony Williams Lifetime, and the members were Larry Young on organ, John McLaughlin on guitar, and Tony. The music they recorded was psychedelic, distorted, jazz-rock fusion in its true form.

In 1969, the band recorded their first record, *Emergency!* The original recording of this album was quite offensive in its recording quality, but on its CD reissue that quality has been greatly improved. The *music* is unquestionably unique. It sounds like an extension of Miles' *Filles De Kilimanjaro*, or a much more aggressive version of *In A Silent Way*. The only drawback was Williams' singing on some of the songs. (Sorry, Tony.) However, this shouldn't turn you away from the recording. There is some good music and some outstanding drumming on this CD. *Emergency!* provides an important bridge from the late-'60s free jazz into the '70s fusion being played by the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Weather Report.

Williams' next release with Lifetime was a more focused date called *Turn It Over*. This is a more listenable affair with fewer vocals from Williams and stronger compositions by Antonio Carlos Jobim, Chick Corea, and John Coltrane.

By the time that *Ego*, the third and last Lifetime record, was made, McLaughlin was gone, and the band had been expanded with the addition of two percussionists. Surprisingly, with the addition of percussion the music got less dense. On *Ego* Tony's drumming left a lot of space. This record isn't as musically interesting as *Emergency!* or *Turn It Over*, but it is different. *Ego* sounds much more arranged, and less spontaneous.

After *Ego*, the Lifetime band disbanded, and Williams made his first "rock 'n' roll" record, *The Old Bum's Rush*. While today this music sounds dated and not very sophisticated, it was the most "different" recording that Williams had done. The listener gets to hear the early Ringo Starr and possibly Mitch Mitchell influences coming through. The music sounds comparable to early Traffic or Jefferson Airplane, but once again Tony's approach is unique. It is very interesting to observe how Williams interprets this less com-



plex, less adventurous style of music. Drumistically there is some worthwhile information to be extracted from this record.

Throughout Tony's time as a bandleader, he did occasionally free-lance. One of the best examples of this was his continued work with his rhythm-section mates from the Davis days. In 1977 Ron Carter led a trio date (with Williams and Hancock) called *Third Plane*. This record is an outstanding study for drummers (or any rhythm-section players). There are many recordings where Williams' drumming has been so overwhelming (compared to the playing of the other musicians) that the result has sounded very unbalanced. But when Tony is paired with musical equals, such as the two on *Third Plane*, the result is stunning. Listen to his straight-down-the-middle support during "Quiet Times," his sheer strength in "Lawra," and his sensitivity during "Stella By Starlight." This is a great example of three musicians playing *together*, instead of just playing at the same time.

While Tony was making his fusion records and free-lancing during the '70s, he was also a part of Hank Jones' Great Jazz Trio. Jones, a musical elder of Williams, is one of the most tasteful pianists ever. With Jones playing piano, Tony was forced to play differently than he did with Herbie Hancock. Jones' traditional



pianistic style pulled out the traditional side of Williams. However, even when Tony plays in a "traditional" drumming style, his playing is still unique. In fact, here it's tremendous, and we should be thankful that this trio was frequently recorded. You may have to search for the records, but listen to the Great Jazz Trio's *Milestones*, *Kindness Joy Love & Happiness*, *At The Village Vanguard*, *Love For Sale*, and *New Wine In Old Bottles* (featuring Jackie McLean). They are all excellent, and worth finding.

In the mid-'70s Tony tried his hand at bandleading again. The records made by the New Tony Williams Lifetime are, to many drummers, two of the most amazing records ever made. Thankfully, both records—*Believe It* and *Million Dollar Legs*—have been reissued on one CD called *The Collection*. In the same way that Tony redefined the style of jazz drumming in 1964 and 1965, he was now reshaping the style of fusion and rock drumming.

These two records don't appeal to many jazz purists, but to drummers they are essential. If they don't inspire a young drummer to go back and really find out what Tony is about, nothing will. In addition to Williams, these recordings also feature a young Allan Holdsworth playing guitar. There is an infinite amount of

drums and music to be transcribed, analyzed, and absorbed on this one CD. Both Williams' and Holdsworth's aggressive and musical playing makes this a must-own for any drummer or guitarist playing today.

Tony's next record as a leader was *Joy Of Flying*. This record featured a long-anticipated duet with avant-garde jazz pianist Cecil Taylor, duets with Jan Hammer, and one extended all-out rock 'n' roll jam with '70s rocker Ronnie Montrose. This album is somewhat schizophrenic in its presentation, but it does offer some outstanding drumming.

One of the highlights of jazz in the late '70s was when the Miles Davis band re-formed (minus Miles) to form VSOP. (They were sometimes joined by trumpeter Freddie Hubbard.) Check out *VSOP The Quintet* and *Live Under The Sky*. Also check out *One Night With Blue Note Volume One*, a live recording that features Hancock, Carter, and Williams supporting Bobby Hutcherson, Freddie Hubbard, and Joe Henderson. Portions of this concert also appear on videotape, and both the tape and the recording are outstanding. (More recently the classic Miles quintet—without their late leader—re-formed to tour and to record *Tribute*.)

In the '80s Tony free-lanced more than he had in the past. He also formed a band that he led until recently. The trumpeter in that band was Wallace Roney, and Williams played on Roney's first recording as a leader, *Verses*. This is a very strong record, and it feels a little looser than the earlier recordings that Williams made with his own band.

Mulgrew Miller was the pianist in Tony's band, and Williams also played on Mulgrew's *The Countdown*. It's some of Williams' and Miller's best playing. They both support guest saxophonist Joe Henderson with fire and taste, and everyone has a chance to shine. Tony's strong presence is also felt on Branford Marsalis's quality recording *Renaissance*.

Perhaps due to his occasional overwhelming volume and strength, not a great deal has been said about Tony Williams' drumming in the piano-trio context. However, some pianists had no problem with Tony's power, and therefore employed his talents on trio recordings. On McCoy Tyner's *Supertrios*, Tony, McCoy, and Ron Carter form one of the most powerful piano trios ever. A highlight of this recording is a duet performance (just Tony and McCoy) of Monk's "I Mean You."

Tommy Flanagan's use of Tony and Ron Carter on Flanagan's *Master Trio* is very different. Tony and Ron are strong on this recording, but not overwhelming. Flanagan's lyricism and musicality, as well as the strength of the songs (mostly standards), are at the forefront of the music.

The late Don Pullen's *New Beginnings* recaptures the freedom, spontaneity, and bravado of 1960s avant-garde jazz. Pullen's strength behind the piano is a good match for Williams' aggressive drumming.

Pianist Geri Alien bridges the gap between strength and lyricism. On Alien's *Twenty One* Carter and Williams support a good mix of originals and jazz standards for a modern, balanced, and interesting recording. Pay close attention to Williams' playing on "Drummer's Song" and "Feed The Fire." This is a quality record.

As previously mentioned, in 1985 Williams began leading a band that recorded many times and toured a great deal. These recordings didn't offer anything new drumistically, but they do

## Tracking Them Down

Here's a list of the albums mentioned in this month's column, including label and catalog information. Following the list are several sources you might want to check for hard-to-find releases.

**Tony Williams:** *Emergency!*, Polydor 849 068-2; *Turn It Over*, Polydor 24-4021; *Ego*, Polydor 24-4065; *The Old Bum's Rush*, Polydor PD 5040; *The Collection*, Columbia CK 47484; *Joy Of Flying*, JC 35705; *Foreign Intrigue*, Blue Note BT 85119; *Civilization*, Blue Note BT 85138; *Angel Street*, Blue Note CDP 7 48494 2; *Native Heart*, Blue Note CDP 7931702; *Story Of Neptune*, Blue Note B214-93170; *Tokyo Live*, Blue Note CDP 0777 7 99031 2. **The Great Jazz Trio:** *Milestones*, Inner City IC 6030; *Kindness Joy Love & Happiness*, Inner City IC 6023; *At The Village Vanguard*, Inner City IC 6013; *Love For Sale*, Inner City IC 6003; *New Wine In Old bottles*, Inner City IC 6029. **VSOP:** *Live Under The Sky*, Columbia COL 471063 2; *The Quintet*, Columbia CK 34976. **McCoy Tyner:** *Supertrios*, Milestone M55003. **Wallace Roney:** *Verses*, Muse MCD 5335. **Ron Carter:** *Third Plane*, Milestone OJCCD 754-2. **Branford Marsalis:** *Renaissance*, Columbia CK 40711. **Geri Allen:** *Twenty One*, Blue Note CDP 7243 8 30028 2 5. **Don Pullen:** *New Beginnings*, Blue Note CDP 7 91785 2. **Tommy Flanagan:** *Master Trio*, Fourstar FS-40057. **Mulgrew Miller:** *The Countdown*, Landmark LCD-1519-2. **Various Artists:** *One Night With Blue Note Volume One*, Blue Note CDP 85113-2. **Miles Davis Tribute Band:** *Tribute*, Qwest/Warner Bros. 45059-2. On Video: **Tony Williams:** *New York Live*, Blue Note Video B5-40009. **Various Artists:** *One Night With Blue Note Preserved*, Blue Note Video BTDK 85117.

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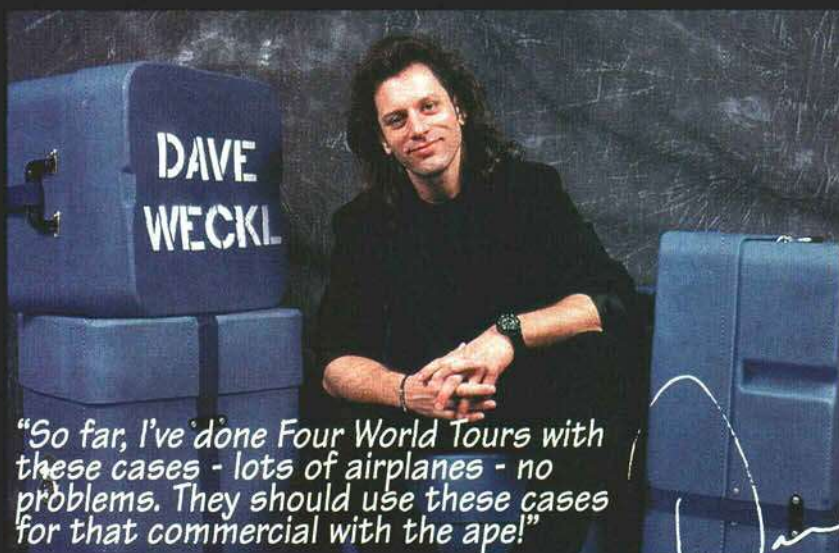
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give us a chance to hear Tony's writing style evolve. Williams has written songs since he made his first record in 1964. Some of those songs—such as "Hand Jive," "Pee Wee," and "Black Comedy"—appear on Miles Davis recordings. But Tony began to compose in earnest in the '70s. One of his most-played compositions is the previously mentioned "Lawra." It appears on *Third Plane*, *Verses*, and many other recordings. When Tony formed his band in 1985, he began composing even more.

With only a few exceptions, all of the compositions contained on Tony's most recent records have been his own. Even his drumming has become more compositional. On the recording *Angel Street* he has three drum interludes that are very reminiscent of Max Roach. On the six different recordings by Tony's band—*Foreign Intrigue*, *Civilization*, *Angel Street*, *Native Heart*, *Story Of Neptune*, and *Tokyo Live*—they developed an identifiable sound. At the core of this sound are Tony's strong and memorable compositions. Of special interest is the band's live video shot in 1989 called *New York Live*.

Tony Williams is possibly the most influential drummer of recent history, but he is also a complete and consummate musician. Tony's influence—through his elasticized but rock-solid timeflow, his unique blend of freedom, composition, and creativity, and the instantly recognizable sound of his drums and cymbals—makes him one of drumming's most important figures. By examining Tony's recorded work you will discover some of the greatest drumming—and music—ever created.



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## Florida Drum Expo '95

Thoroughbred Music of Tampa and Clearwater, Florida presented its seventh annual Florida Drum Expo on Sunday, October 15 at the University of South Florida. The performance drew a crowd of nearly 1,000 avid drummers—who were also treated to a consumer products show put on by the various sponsoring manufacturers. Sunday's show was preceded by master classes held in Thoroughbred stores on Saturday. Here are some of the highlights of the weekend.



Sheila E and Peter Michael Escovedo combined their talents on Latin percussion instruments and drumkits with high-energy showmanship to create an exciting performance.



Turned sideways and nearly over-run by his eager audience, Steve Smith exhibited his unparalleled skills as he demonstrated soloing techniques based on historic American drumming styles.



In foreground, from left: Jim Chapin, Thoroughbred Music's A.J. Altieri, and Dom Famularo. Jim conducted master classes on Saturday and performed on Sunday—at which time he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from Thoroughbred Music.



Saturday master classes were conducted in Tampa by Rick Latham and Gary Chaffee. (Rick found a particularly original way to demonstrate heel-down versus heel-up bass drum technique.) Meanwhile, at the Clearwater location, Arthur Hull conducted a "community drum circle."



John Robinson and Luis Conte demonstrated how drums and percussion can lock together to achieve both a solid groove and an original sound—skills that have made them each first-call studio musicians.

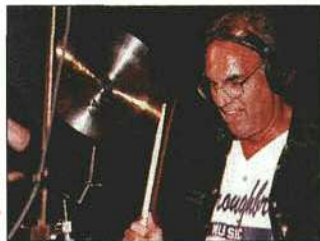


Dream Theater's Mike Portnoy wowed the audience with his powerful yet tasteful style, and went on to discuss his approach to odd-time playing.

Eleven-year-old Tony Royster nailed solid grooves on bebop and funk tracks, and demonstrated impressive soloing skills.



Liberty DeVitto's drumming—and his comments to the crowd—focused on playing from the heart.



Emcee and performer Dom Famularo kicked Sunday off with a brief but enthusiastic display of chops.



Additional performers at the Florida Drum Expo included Future Corps from EPCOT Center at Walt Disney World, and Yuko Daiko, a traditional Japanese taiko drumming troupe. Sponsors for the event included Tama, Vic Firth, ddrum, Drum Workshop, LP Music Group, Premier, Roland, Yamaha, Pro-Mark, Paiste, Pearl, Sonor, Zildjian, Vater, Remo, Sabian, Toca, CPP Belwin, Hart Dynamics, and Ludwig.



## KAT Closes Its Doors

Citing insurmountable financial circumstances, KAT Inc.—one of the major names in electronic percussion—closed its doors effective November 24, 1995. After an unsuccessful attempt over the previous several weeks to put together a financing package that would ensure KAT's future, KAT management sought a buyer for the company. When that effort failed in mid-November, the company was forced to cease operations.

KAT founder and president Bill Katoski was quoted as saying, "We only wish that there was some way that we could continue. However, the manufacturing problems we suffered in 1994 with the *trapKAT* product line—which ultimately caused a major financial loss—combined with reliability problems that we experienced with the *trapKAT* in 1995 were events that we could not recover from without substantial outside assistance."

## Indy Quickies

The tenth **United States Percussion Camp** will be held July 7-13 at Eastern Illinois University. Directed by noted percussion educator Dr. Johnny Lee Lane (and affectionately dubbed the "percussion boot camp of the Midwest"), the USPC features high-intensity, all-day instruction on all facets of percussion performance. Instruments covered include drumset, snare drum, Latin percussion, mallet percussion, electronics, and timpani. Instructors will include Ndugu Chancier, Rob Carson, Julie Spencer, Lewis Nash, and camp founder and host professor Johnny Lee Lane. For further information contact Joseph Martin, Director, Eastern Music Camp, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL 61920, (217) 581-3925 or 581-3817.

On September 18, 1995 the **Berklee College Of Music** hosted a tribute to **Joe Morello**. Morello performed a solo clinic for students during the day, and was later treated to a musical tribute by three of Berklee's top student drummers, **Steve Has, Anders Brandt, and Antonio Sanchez**. Following their performances was



Kimberly Grant

Berklee's Dean Anderson (left) honors Joe Morello at a recent tribute to the drummer. Morello protege Danny Gottlieb (right) shared in the festivities.

a special snare drum solo by faculty member **Jon Hazilla**. Morello then came on stage to perform with his long-time student **Danny Gottlieb**. Joe was then honored by **Sabian, Drum Workshop**, and Berklee, via percussion department chairman **Dean Anderson**, who presented Joe with plaques from each company acknowledging his musical and educational contributions over the years. The evening concluded with Joe performing with Jon Hazilla's band.

In related news, **Berklee** founder **Dr. Lawrence Berk** recently received the "Music For Life" award from the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). The award was presented in recognition of Berk's lifelong dedication to—and promotion of—music education.

The 1995 Mellon Jazz Festival, held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, recently honored acclaimed jazz drummer **Joe Harris** by dedicating the entire festival to the sixty-nine-year-old veteran. Harris's fifty-year career includes work with Dizzy Gillespie's 1940s big band, with Quincy Jones, and with Lena Home. He also taught jazz history at the University of Pittsburgh from 1972 to 1986. Harris and his current band were featured at concerts and club appearances throughout the Mellon festival.

**John Wyre**, member of the internationally acclaimed percussion ensemble **Nexus**, has been selected as chair for the **Percussive Arts Society's World Percussion Committee**. The committee will be responsible for promoting PAS events relating to world percussion.

**Pro-Mark** has joined with **Youth Opportunities Unlimited**, a non-profit organization, in a nationwide effort aimed at reinforcing teen resistance to drug/alcohol abuse and gang activity. **YOU** reaches three to four thousand students each week during school assemblies presented by musicians and other individuals dedicated to helping young people through the difficult teenage years. Similar programs are offered year-round through law enforcement agencies and community service organizations. Through music, dialog, and a dynamic light show, students are encouraged to live their lives drug-free, and to appreciate the differences in one another instead of allowing those differences (race, background, socio-economic status, etc.) to lead to gang-related violence. For more information on the **YOU** program contact Pro-Mark at (800) 822-1492.

## MD Giveaway Winner

**Jamie Betts** of St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada is the winner of the Sherpa *SP63-8* electronic percussion pad system offered in *MD's* November '95 giveaway. The system, comprised of snare, tom, cymbal, hi-hat, and kick-drum pads and an *RS91* mounting rack, is valued at over \$1,600. Congratulations to Jamie from Sherpa and *Modern Drummer*.





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**Electronic Percussion Newsletter**—Winter 1996 issue features an interview with Future Man of Bela Fleck and The Flecktons. Write to: Electronic Rhythms-M, P.O. Box 475, Watertown, MA 02272.

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## Drumkit Of The Month



We chose Ft. Wayne, Indiana drummer Dennis Schenker's mid-1960s Trixon kit as our selection this month for two reasons: the rarity of the drums themselves, and the loving care with which he restored them. (Take a look at the "before" photo to get an idea of the challenge Dennis faced.) Dennis credits Remo, Inc., for working with him to create new custom-made heads for the unusually shaped bass drum that distinguishes this hard-to-find West German classic.

### PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.



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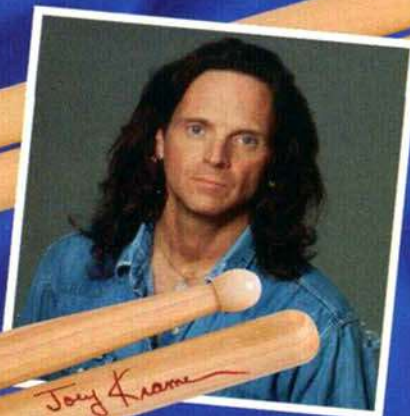
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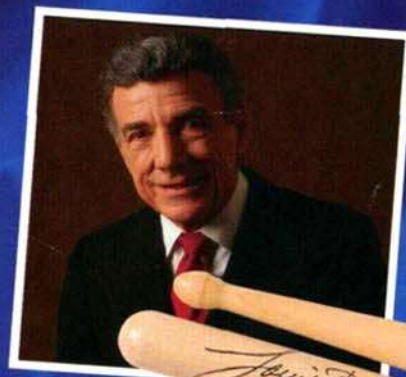
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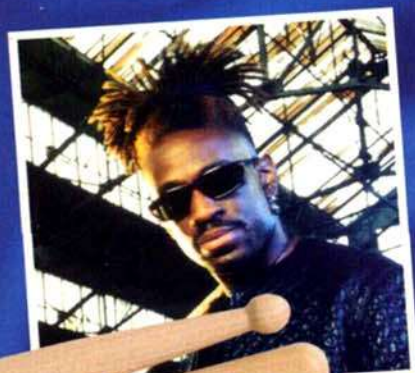


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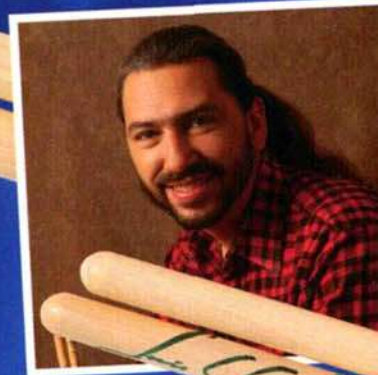
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